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Preface: Expanded Core Framework Series

This is a new series using an **Expanded Core Framework** that evolved from the original **Core Framework** .

This expanded analysis was created through continued collaboration between Thomas J. Bryan and Claude (Anthropic's AI system). The collaboration improved both the methodology and the conclusions.

Human Contribution (Thomas J. Bryan):

- Research direction and case study selection
- Theoretical framework and interpretation
- Final analytical judgments and publication decisions

AI Contribution (Claude/Anthropic):

- Historical scholarship synthesis and bibliographic research
- Essay composition and structural analysis
- Intellectual challenge and critical questioning
- Pattern identification and comparative analysis

Thomas J. Bryan
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Original preface ("An Unexpected Journey") published separately provides full context for how this research project developed.

The Latter-Day Saints: Alternative Elite Formation and Strategic Accommodation in 19th Century America (1830-1896) - Part 1 of 3

Introduction: The Assassination and the Puzzle

On June 27, 1844, a mob of 150-200 men with painted faces stormed Carthage Jail in western Illinois. Inside, awaiting trial on charges of inciting riot and treason, were Joseph Smith Jr.—prophet, mayor, lieutenant general—and his brother Hyrum. The mob fired through the door and windows. Hyrum fell first, struck by four bullets. Joseph attempted escape through a window but was shot from outside and fell to the ground. The mob finished him with additional shots. He was 38 years old. The body was transported to Nauvoo, the Mormon city of 12,000 he had built on the Mississippi River, and put on display. Tens of thousands viewed the corpse. The movement he founded seemed destined to collapse like dozens of other utopian experiments that littered antebellum America.

It didn't collapse. One hundred eighty years later, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints claims 17 million members worldwide, controls an estimated $100-150 billion in assets, operates extensive business enterprises, educates tens of thousands at church-owned universities, and maintains substantial political influence in the United States. Mormons are disproportionately represented in the US Congress, federal agencies, corporate leadership, and intelligence services. The church that began as a persecuted sect led by a convicted treasure-digger has become an integrated component of the American establishment.

This transformation presents a historical puzzle. **Why did the Mormons survive when comparable 19th-century alternative movements were destroyed or faded into obscurity?**

The Shakers established successful communal societies in the 1770s-1850s but died out through celibacy and inability to recruit. The Oneida Community (1848-1881) practiced communal property and "complex marriage" (group sexuality) but dissolved under external pressure and internal conflict. The Harmonists established three successful communal towns (1805-1905) but couldn't sustain membership across generations. Brook Farm, New Harmony, Zoar, and dozens of other utopian experiments collapsed within decades. Even the Quakers, far less threatening than Mormons, suffered persecution and never achieved comparable institutional power or wealth.

The Mormons faced extraordinary suppression: violent expulsion from Missouri (1838-1839), assassination of their founding prophet (1844), forced exodus from Illinois (1845-1846), armed conflict with federal troops (Utah War, 1857-1858), decades of legal persecution targeting their

peculiar institution of polygamy, and eventual federal seizure of church property (1887). They should have been destroyed. Instead, they adapted, accommodated, and ultimately integrated into American elite structures while maintaining distinct identity and substantial autonomy.

The Comparative Framework: Alternative Institutions and State Power

The Mormon case illuminates a fundamental pattern in elite power dynamics: **alternative institutions provoke suppression from existing state powers, and survival requires transformation from competitive to complementary**.

Consider the Jesuits (1540-1773): They began as elite servants—confessors to kings, educators of nobility, colonial administrators. Their effectiveness made them wealthy and powerful. By the 18th century, they had accumulated enough wealth, knowledge (through confessions and intelligence networks), and influence to threaten the monarchies they served. When European nation-states consolidated power, they couldn't tolerate competing transnational authority. Portugal expelled Jesuits in 1759, France in 1764, Spain in 1767, and finally even the Pope suppressed the entire order in 1773. The coordination infrastructure became too autonomous; state power destroyed it.

Consider the Nizari Ismailis (1090-1256): They built an alternative elite structure in medieval Persia—a distributed network of mountain fortresses, operating outside existing state control, projecting power through strategic assassination. For 166 years they survived against Seljuk Turks, Crusaders, and various Muslim dynasties. But when the Mongols invaded with overwhelming force and systematic determination, the Nizaris were destroyed. Their fortresses fell, their Grand Master was executed, their communities were massacred or scattered. They survived only by going underground, practicing *taqiyya* (religious dissimulation), concealing their true identity for centuries.

The Mormons (1830-1896) occupied middle ground between these cases. Like the Nizaris, they built alternative institutions competitive with state power: parallel legal system, armed militia rivaling the US Army, theocratic governance, separate economic system. Like the Jesuits, they accumulated wealth and influence that threatened existing elites. But unlike both, the Mormons executed **strategic accommodation**—surrendering the most threatening elements of their system (polygamy, theocracy, economic independence) while preserving core institutional authority (church hierarchy, tithing extraction, temple rituals). They transformed from competitive to complementary institutions.

The Key Variables: Why Mormon Accommodation Succeeded

Geographic Isolation: The Utah Territory was 1,300 miles from federal power centers, separated by mountains, deserts, and hostile indigenous peoples. Distance made immediate military suppression expensive and difficult. This bought time—two generations (1847-1896)—for Mormons to build economic and social infrastructure before integration became inevitable. The Jesuits, operating in European cities, had no such isolation. The Nizaris had mountain fortresses but were surrounded by enemies without buffer zones.

Pragmatic Leadership: Brigham Young and his successors proved willing to compromise when survival required it. They abandoned theological principles they had declared eternal and divine when federal pressure became unbearable. Joseph Smith might have fought to martyrdom (he did), but Young calculated costs and benefits. The Jesuit Superior Generals answered to the Pope and couldn't unilaterally surrender core elements. The Nizari Grand Masters faced existential Mongol threat leaving no room for negotiation.

Favorable Timing: By the 1890s, the United States needed western integration. The transcontinental railroad was complete (1869); mining booms required stable governance; statehood for western territories was policy priority. Mormon cooperation had value to federal authorities. Destroying them would have required expensive military occupation. Integrating them was cheaper and more profitable. Neither Jesuits (facing consolidated absolute monarchies) nor Nizaris (facing genocidal Mongol conquest) enjoyed such favorable circumstances.

Strategic Selectivity: Mormons didn't surrender everything—they surrendered what federal authorities demanded (polygamy, theocracy) while preserving what federal authorities didn't care about (internal church authority, tithing extraction, temple rituals, missionary system). The Jesuits tried to preserve everything (papal loyalty, transnational structure, economic empire) and lost everything. The Nizaris fought for everything and were destroyed.

The Framework Applied

This study examines Mormon power through an eight-part analytical framework designed to reveal elite mechanisms:

I. Foundation Conditions: The Second Great Awakening, Jacksonian Democracy, economic instability, and western expansion that created opportunities for alternative institution-building

II. Narrative Construction: Restoration theology, chosen people ideology, continuing revelation doctrine, and other narratives legitimizing Mormon authority and mobilizing commitment

III. Legal and Institutional Frameworks: The parallel sovereignty structures—Nauvoo Legion, ecclesiastical courts, theocratic governance—that threatened American state power

IV. Wealth Extraction Mechanisms: Tithing, consecration, church business monopolies, and elite accumulation patterns creating Mormon economic power

V. Information Control: Surveillance systems, excommunication threats, Deseret News monopoly, and temple secrecy maintaining internal discipline

VI. Resistance Suppression: Violence against external enemies (Missouri War, Mountain Meadows Massacre) and internal dissenters (Danites, excommunications)

VII. Elite Network Coordination: Leadership succession, managing internal conflicts, and most critically, the accommodation strategy transforming Mormons from threat to integrated elite

VIII. Long-Term Consequences: The modern Mormon position as complementary rather than competitive institution, and comparative lessons about alternative institution survival

The Mormon case demonstrates that **alternative elite institutions can survive state suppression through strategic accommodation**—but the price is transformation from revolutionary challenge to system integration. Understanding this pattern illuminates contemporary questions about cryptocurrency, charter cities, intentional communities, and other experiments in alternative governance.

Section I: Foundation Conditions - The Religious Marketplace and Economic Chaos

The Second Great Awakening: Religious Ferment and Institutional Competition

Early 19th-century America experienced extraordinary religious creativity, later termed the "Second Great Awakening" (approximately 1790-1840). Unlike the First Great Awakening (1730s-1740s), which revitalized existing denominations, the Second produced entirely new religious movements and challenged established churches' authority.

The Disestablishment Context:

The First Amendment (1791) prohibited federal religious establishment; state establishments gradually dissolved (Massachusetts, last holdout, disestablished Congregationalism in 1833). This created **religious free market**—no state church, no legal monopoly, denominations competing for adherents. Consequences:

- **Entrepreneurial religion**: Charismatic preachers could found movements without theological credentials or ecclesiastical authorization
- **Innovation rewarded**: Distinctive doctrines and practices attracted attention in crowded marketplace
- **Emotional appeal**: Revivals emphasized direct religious experience over theological learning
- **Democratic rhetoric**: Anti-elite, anti-establishment themes resonated with Jacksonian era egalitarianism

The Burned-Over District:

Western New York—the "Burned-Over District"—became laboratory for religious experimentation. The term (coined by revivalist Charles Finney) suggested the region had been "burned over" by so many revivals that spiritual fuel was exhausted. In reality, continued burning:

Major movements originating in western New York:

- Mormonism (1830)
- Millerites/Seventh-day Adventists (1840s)
- Spiritualism (1848)
- Oneida Community (1848)
- Numerous smaller sects and prophets

Why western New York?

- **Recent settlement**: Erie Canal (completed 1825) spurred rapid population growth, creating unstable communities without established institutions
- **Economic volatility**: Boom-bust cycles (canal construction, land speculation) created anxiety seeking religious outlets
- **Denominational competition**: Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian churches competed intensely, weakening all
- **New England migration**: Transplanted Yankees brought reform impulses (temperance, abolitionism, millennialism)

The religious marketplace rewarded innovation. Established denominations (Presbyterian, Congregationalist) emphasized education, theology, social respectability—appeals to stable, prosperous populations. New movements needed different strategies for mobile, economically precarious populations seeking certainty amid chaos.

Jacksonian Democracy: Anti-Elite Sentiment and Popular Sovereignty

Andrew Jackson's presidency (1829-1837) coincided with Mormon founding and reflected broader cultural shifts:

Political Democratization:

- Elimination of property requirements for voting (white men)
- Direct election of presidential electors (replacing legislative selection)
- "Common man" rhetoric challenging established elites
- Spoils system (replacing bureaucratic expertise with partisan loyalty)
- Bank War (Jackson vs. Second Bank of the United States, 1832-1836)

Cultural Impacts:

Anti-intellectualism: Suspicion of educated elites, lawyers, established clergy. Popular wisdom trumped expert authority. Created space for unlettered prophets like Joseph Smith (minimal formal education) claiming direct divine authority without theological training or ecclesiastical credentials.

Westward expansion ideology: Manifest Destiny emerging (term coined 1845); belief Americans had divine mandate to settle continent. Mormon "gathering to Zion" fit this pattern while adding millennialist urgency—building Kingdom of God before Christ's return.

Self-made man ideal: Economic mobility celebrated; opportunity for ambitious individuals to rise without aristocratic connections. Mormon emphasis on revelation and charisma (rather than education or ordination) aligned with Jacksonian ideology.

The Contradiction:

Jacksonian Democracy was simultaneously:

- **Egalitarian** (for white men): Extended political participation, challenged established authorities
- **Exclusionary** (for others): Indian Removal (1830), pro-slavery, anti-black, anti-Catholic

Mormons initially benefited from egalitarian aspects (religious freedom, westward expansion) but suffered from exclusionary aspects once perceived as threatening "American" values.

Economic Instability: Panic of 1837 and Millennial Anxiety

The Boom (1834-1837):

Jacksonian economic policies created speculation bubble:

- Bank War: Jackson destroyed Second Bank of United States (1836), transferred federal deposits to state "pet banks"
- Wildcat banking: State banks issued paper currency with inadequate specie backing
- Land speculation: Federal land sales exploded (from 4 million acres in 1834 to 20 million in 1836)
- Infrastructure boom: Canals, roads, railroads financed through debt

The Bust (1837-1843):

Panic of 1837 triggered by:

- Specie Circular (1836): Jackson required gold/silver for federal land purchases, revealing paper currency weakness
- British credit contraction: London banks recalled American loans
- Cotton price collapse: Export economy crashed

Consequences:

- 40% of banks failed
- Unemployment reached 25% in cities
- Land values collapsed (90% decline in some markets)

- Foreclosures and debt imprisonment widespread
- Depression lasted until 1843

Religious Impacts:

Economic catastrophe reinforced millennial expectations:

- Worldly systems were failing (banks, governments, markets)
- Divine intervention seemed imminent (Christ's return to establish justice)
- Alternative economic systems appeared necessary (Mormon consecration, Shaker communalism)
- Charismatic prophets offering certainty attracted desperate populations

Joseph Smith's economic teachings resonated precisely because conventional economy had failed. If banks couldn't be trusted, if markets collapsed, if prosperity was ephemeral, perhaps divine revelation offered better guidance than human wisdom.

Western Expansion and Territorial Acquisition

The Territorial Context:

1830s-1840s saw dramatic US expansion:

- Indian Removal Act (1830): Eastern indigenous nations forced west, opening land for white settlement
- Texas independence (1836) and annexation (1845)
- Oregon Territory dispute with Britain resolved (1846)
- Mexican-American War (1846-1848): US acquired Southwest, California, Utah, Nevada

Mormon Timing:

Mormon movement emerged just as federal authority in western territories was weakest:

- Illinois (Mormon Nauvoo period, 1839-1846): Recently admitted state (1818), frontier character, weak state government
- Utah Territory (1847-1896): Outside US jurisdiction 1847-1848 (Mexican territory), became US territory 1850, minimal federal presence
- Distance from Washington: Federal government lacked administrative capacity for direct rule of distant territories

This timing was critical: Mormons built alternative institutions in **power vacuums** before federal authority consolidated. Had they emerged after Civil War (1865) when federal power expanded dramatically, suppression would have been immediate and overwhelming.

Protestant Establishment Hegemony and Anti-Catholic Nativism

The Protestant Consensus:

Despite denominational competition, broad Protestant consensus defined "American" religion:

- Bible (King James Version) as foundational text
- Individual interpretation (vs. Catholic hierarchical authority)
- Voluntary church membership (vs. state establishment)
- Temperance, Sabbatarianism, "respectable" morality
- Anglo-Saxon cultural superiority

Anti-Catholicism:

1830s-1840s saw intense anti-Catholic agitation:

- Irish immigration (fleeing famine) increased Catholic population
- "Popery" portrayed as un-American (authoritarian, foreign-controlled)
- Convent-burning, anti-Catholic riots (Charlestown 1834, Philadelphia 1844)
- "Know-Nothing" political movement (1850s) sought to restrict Catholic political participation

Mormon Ambiguity:

Mormons were simultaneously:

- **Protestant** (Bible-based, anti-Catholic, emphasis on individual revelation)
- **Catholic-like** (hierarchical authority, priesthood, ecclesiastical courts, temple ceremonies with Catholic-ritual similarities)
- **Neither** (additional scripture, continuing revelation, radically different theology)

Protestant establishment couldn't categorize Mormons neatly, but ultimately viewed them as dangerous—combining Catholic authoritarianism with Protestant populism, creating mobilized voting blocs under clerical control.

Joseph Smith: The Prophet from Nowhere

Family Background:

Joseph Smith Jr. was born December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont, sixth of nine children. Family economic trajectory: downward.

Smith family economic failures:

- Multiple farm failures in Vermont, New Hampshire
- 1816: "Year Without Summer" (volcanic winter) destroyed crops; family fled debt
- Moved to Palmyra, New York (1816-1817)
- Attempted farming on mortgaged land; lost property (1825)

- Turned to treasure-seeking (folk magic practice searching for buried valuables)

Treasure-Digging and Folk Magic:

Joseph Sr. and Joseph Jr. engaged in folk magic practices common in rural New York:

- Used "seer stones" (polished rocks) for divination
- Hired by neighbors to locate buried treasure
- Joseph Jr. achieved local reputation as skilled seer
- 1826: Convicted in Bainbridge court as "disorderly person" for fraudulent treasure-seeking (evidence: court records discovered 1971, contested by Mormon historians but likely authentic)

This background mattered:

- Smith's later "translation" of golden plates used same seer stone techniques as treasure-seeking
- Religious authority emerged from marginal folk practices, not mainstream Christianity
- Pattern: Economic failure → folk magic → religious prophecy → institution-building
- Class resentment: Poor family facing foreclosure, witnessing wealthy neighbor prosperity, created grievance underlying later radical economic teachings

First Vision (1820):

Smith claimed that at age 14 (1820), confused about which church to join, he prayed in woods near family farm. God and Jesus appeared, told him all existing churches were wrong, he would be instrument of restoration. Critical elements:

- **Solitary experience**: No witnesses, only Smith's testimony
- **Anti-denominational**: All existing churches condemned as corrupt
- **Authority claim**: Direct divine mandate superseding all existing clergy
- **Multiple versions**: Smith told story differently over time (1832, 1835, 1838 versions vary significantly in details)

Golden Plates and Book of Mormon (1823-1830):

- 1823: Angel Moroni allegedly appeared, revealed golden plates buried in Hill Cumorah
- 1827: Smith retrieved plates, began "translation" using seer stone
- Translation process: Smith placed seer stone in hat, face in hat, dictated text while plates were covered or in other room
- 1829: Translation completed (Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery served as scribes)
- March 1830: Book of Mormon published (5,000 copies)
- April 6, 1830: Church of Christ (later Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints) formally organized

The Book of Mormon's Content:

Claimed to be history of ancient Americas:

- Hebrew civilization fled Jerusalem (600 BCE), sailed to Americas
- Split into righteous Nephites and wicked Lamanites (ancestors of Native Americans)
- Christ visited Americas after resurrection, established church
- Nephites destroyed by Lamanites (c. 400 CE); prophet Mormon compiled history on gold plates
- Addressed 19th-century American concerns: Indian origins, republican government, religious freedom, anti-monarchism, revival controversy

The Founding Appeal:

Book of Mormon offered:

- **American scripture**: Divine revelation on American soil, about American peoples
- **Answer to Indian question**: Indigenous peoples were fallen Israelites, could be restored through conversion
- **Millennialist urgency**: Christ's return imminent, true church restored
- **Authority without credentials**: Unlettered prophet receiving revelation superseded educated clergy
- **Economic hope**: Gathering to Zion promised communal prosperity amid individual economic failure

By 1830, Joseph Smith had transformed from failed farmer's son and convicted treasure-digger into founding prophet of new religious movement. The economic chaos, religious competition, westward expansion, and anti-elite sentiment of Jacksonian America created space for such unlikely emergence.

Section II: Narrative Construction - The Theology of Alternative Power

Restoration Theology: True Christianity Restored After Universal Apostasy

The Great Apostasy Doctrine:

Mormon theology posited that shortly after Christ and apostles died, Christianity fell into "Great Apostasy"—complete corruption of doctrine, loss of priesthood authority, abandonment of true ordinances. All existing Christian churches—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox—were therefore false, lacking divine authority.

Evidence cited:

- Biblical prophecies of falling away (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
- Early Christian theological controversies (Nicaea 325, subsequent councils)
- Incorporation into Roman Empire (Constantinian shift)
- Medieval "corruptions" (clerical celibacy, papal authority, indulgences)
- Protestant Reformation incompleteness (preserved corrupted doctrines)

Restoration Logic:

If universal apostasy occurred, then:

- New prophetic call was necessary (couldn't come through existing churches)
- Direct divine intervention required (Joseph Smith's First Vision)
- Restoration of ancient authorities and ordinances
- Book of Mormon as "another testament of Jesus Christ" restoring lost knowledge

The Strategic Function:

Apostasy doctrine accomplished several objectives:

Delegitimizing competitors: All other churches were false, so their criticism of Mormonism was irrelevant

Creating urgency: True church restored after 1,400 years; Christ's return imminent

Justifying innovation: Novel doctrines weren't heresies but restorations of ancient truths

Centralizing authority: Only Mormon priesthood possessed divine legitimation

This narrative challenged not just theological claims but institutional authority of entire Christian establishment—Protestant and Catholic alike. No wonder religious leaders viewed Mormons as dangerous.

Chosen People Narrative: Mormons as New Israel

The Covenant People:

Mormons weren't merely another Christian denomination but **new covenant people** comparable to ancient Israel:

- God selected them for special mission
- Gathering to physical Zion (geographic concentration)
- Building literal Kingdom of God on earth before Christ's return
- Priesthood lineage tracing to ancient Israel (through Joseph, Ephraim)
- Gentiles (non-Mormons) were outside covenant unless converted

Suffering as Validation:

Persecution proved chosen status:

- Ancient Israel suffered (Egyptian slavery, Babylonian captivity)
- Early Christians suffered (Roman persecution)
- Mormons suffered (Missouri expulsions, Illinois violence)

Joseph Smith taught: "The nearer a person approaches the Lord, a greater power will be manifested by the adversary to prevent the accomplishment of His purposes." Suffering = proximity to God = validation of truth.

The Strategic Function:

Solidarity creation: Shared persecution identity bonded members

Sacrifice justification: Economic consecration, polygamy, geographical isolation accepted because chosen people must sacrifice

Violence legitimation: Defense against gentile oppression was righteous (Old Testament parallels—Joshua conquering Canaan)

Exit costs: Leaving wasn't mere denominational change but apostasy from God's chosen people

Continuing Revelation: The Living Prophet's Authority

"We believe in... revelation":

Ninth Article of Faith: "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

This doctrine was revolutionary:

Superseding Scripture: Past revelation (Bible, Book of Mormon) was incomplete. Living prophet received ongoing revelation adapting doctrine to circumstances.

Superseding Reason: Prophet's revelations weren't subject to logical critique or empirical testing. Divine wisdom transcended human understanding.

Superseding Democracy: Church wasn't governed by congregational vote or democratic procedures. Prophet spoke for God; members "sustained" (approved) decisions but couldn't veto.

The Practical Implications:

Joseph Smith used continuing revelation to:

- Reverse prior teachings when expedient (e.g., initially opposed secret societies, later created secret Council of Fifty)
- Introduce controversial doctrines gradually (polygamy revealed privately to elite in early 1840s, publicly denied until 1852)
- Consolidate authority (revelations made Smith trustee-in-trust of all church property, lieutenant general of Nauvoo Legion, candidate for US president)
- Resolve disputes (revelations settled theological controversies, organizational conflicts)

Example: The Word of Wisdom (1833):

Revelation prohibiting alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea (later hot drinks generally). Initially not mandatory; became requirement for temple admission in 20th century. Content is less important than mechanism: dietary restrictions weren't biblical or rational but revealed—demonstrating prophet's authority over daily life.

The Strategic Function:

Continuing revelation created **adaptive theology**:

- Doctrine could change without admitting error (wasn't reversal but additional light)
- Controversial teachings could be introduced gradually (preparing members)
- Prophet's authority was absolute (God's spokesman)
- Dissent was impossible (questioning prophet = questioning God)

This mechanism later enabled accommodation: Polygamy abandonment (1890) wasn't compromise but revelation. Black priesthood exclusion ended (1978) through revelation. Doctrine served strategy, not vice versa.

Gathering to Zion: Geographic Concentration and Kingdom Building

The Gathering Commandment:

Early revelations commanded Saints to "gather" to physical Zion where Christ would return:

- Initially Independence, Missouri (1831)
- After Missouri expulsion, Nauvoo, Illinois (1839)
- After Nauvoo exodus, Salt Lake Valley, Utah (1847)

Strategic Advantages of Gathering:

Economic:

- Pooled resources (Law of Consecration, 1831)
- Mutual aid societies
- Church-directed economic development (settlement planning, irrigation, industries)
- Market power (Mormon purchasing cooperatives, ZCMI monopoly)

Political:

- Voting bloc (Mormons voted as directed by leadership)
- Municipal self-governance (Nauvoo Charter granted unprecedented autonomy)
- Theocratic control (in Utah, church and state merged)

Military:

- Concentrated population enabled militia organization (Nauvoo Legion)
- Defensive fortifications possible
- Show of force deterring attack

Social:

- Surveillance and discipline easier in concentrated communities
- Apostasy more difficult (leaving meant physical relocation)
- Endogamy encouraged (marrying within faith)
- Cultural reproduction (Mormon identity reinforced through daily interaction)

The Costs:

Concentration also created vulnerabilities:

- Made Mormons visible targets for mob violence
- Concentrated assets subject to seizure
- Geographic isolation limited economic opportunities
- Created suspicion (Why separate if not dangerous?)

But benefits outweighed costs until federal government developed capacity to project power into western territories (post-Civil War).

Persecution Narrative: Suffering as Proof of Truth

The Catalog of Sufferings:

Mormon historical consciousness centers on persecution:

- Ohio: Tarring and feathering of Joseph Smith (1832), Kirtland Safety Society collapse and defections (1837)
- Missouri: "Mormon War" (1838), Haun's Mill Massacre (17 killed), Extermination Order (Governor Boggs: "Mormons must be exterminated or driven from the state")
- Illinois: Nauvoo Expositor press destruction (1844), Joseph Smith assassination (1844), forced exodus (1845-1846)
- Utah: Utah War (1857-1858), federal troops occupation, anti-polygamy persecution

Martyrology:

Joseph Smith as martyr comparable to Christ:

- Innocent victim of mob violence
- Killed for religious beliefs
- "Sealed testimony with blood"
- Modern parallels to ancient prophets (Stephen, James, Peter, Paul—all martyred)

The Strategic Function:

Internal solidarity: Shared victim identity bonded members

External sympathy: Persecution narrative appealed to American religious freedom values

Dissent delegitimation: Critics were persecutors; listening to them = joining mob

Sacrifice normalization: If prophet died for faith, members' lesser sacrifices (tithing, missions, polygamy, geographic exile) were reasonable

Historical inevitability: Prophets always suffered; Mormon suffering proved they were true prophets

Modern church histories emphasize persecution while minimizing Mormon violence (Mountain Meadows Massacre, Danite intimidation). Persecution narrative is carefully curated to maintain victim identity even as church has become powerful institution.

Economic Consecration: The United Order and Communal Property

The Law of Consecration (1831):

Early revelation commanded members to "consecrate" property to church:

- Members deeded all possessions to church
- Bishop assigned "stewardship" (property adequate for family needs)
- Surplus production went to church storehouse for redistribution to poor
- Ideally: "No poor among them" (Acts 4:34-35)

The United Order Experiments:

Multiple attempts at communal economics:

- Kirtland, Ohio (1831-1838): Partially implemented, collapsed during banking crisis
- Missouri (1831-1838): Disrupted by violence and expulsions
- Nauvoo (1839-1846): Mostly abandoned (private property returned)
- Utah communities (1874-1877): Brigham Young revival, mostly failures within 3 years

Why Communalism Failed:

Free rider problems: Some members contributed little, consumed much

Incentive distortion: Why work hard if surplus is redistributed?

Administrative complexity: Determining "needs" vs. "wants," "surplus" vs. "adequate" was contentious

Elite exemption: Church leaders accumulated private wealth while rank-and-file consecrated

External pressure: Needed cash economy for trade with gentiles

What Replaced It: Tithing (1838):

After consecration failures, Smith instituted simpler system:

- 10% of income (later clarified as gross income)
- Mandatory for temple admission (later development)
- No accounting to members of how spent
- Leadership controlled funds

The Strategic Function:

Economic teachings served multiple purposes:

Egalitarian appeal: Attracted poor converts with promise of economic justice

Resource mobilization: Whether consecration or tithing, church extracted member wealth

Dependency creation: Members without property depended on church for survival

Elite enrichment: While preaching communalism, leadership accumulated private wealth (Joseph Smith died owing debts but controlled property; Brigham Young died worth hundreds of thousands)

Boundary maintenance: Economic integration with gentiles limited by church-controlled economy

The contradiction between communalist rhetoric and elite accumulation patterns revealed that "consecration" functioned as upward wealth transfer mechanism, not egalitarian redistribution.

Polygamy Theology: Elite Privilege as Religious Duty

Plural Marriage Introduction (1840s):

Sometime in early 1840s, Joseph Smith secretly introduced "celestial marriage"—polygamy justified through:

Biblical precedent: Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon had multiple wives

Restoration logic: Ancient prophets practiced polygamy; restored church should too

Theological necessity: Celestial marriage required for highest heaven (exaltation)

Procreation mandate: More wives = more children = more spirits given bodies = higher spiritual status

The Implementation:

Smith introduced polygamy cautiously:

- Revealed privately to trusted male elite
- Publicly denied when rumors spread (1842-1844)
- Polyandry practiced (Smith married women with living husbands—at least 11 cases)
- Younger brides (several under 18, including 14-year-old Helen Mar Kimball)

Nauvoo Period: Perhaps 30-40 men practicing polygamy by 1844, including most apostles

Utah Period: Polygamy acknowledged publicly (1852), became required for highest heaven, approximately 20-30% of Mormon families polygamous by 1880s

Elite Concentration:

Polygamy was elite privilege disguised as religious duty:

Who practiced:

- Church leaders (Joseph Smith: 30-40 wives; Brigham Young: 55+ wives; John Taylor: 25+ wives)
- Wealthy members (could afford multiple households)
- Politically favored (polygamy as patronage reward)

Who didn't:

- Most Mormon men (majority remained monogamous)
- Poor members (couldn't support multiple wives)
- New converts (needed years proving faithful)

The Economics of Polygamy:

Supporting multiple wives and dozens of children required:

- Land for housing and farms
- Clothing, food for large families
- Political protection against prosecution

Average Mormon man: One wife, 4-6 children, small farm = barely subsistent

Elite polygamist: 5 wives, 25+ children, multiple properties = required substantial wealth

Result: **Polygamy concentrated women and reproductive capacity among elite males**—biological and social hierarchy justified by theology.

The Strategic Function:

Elite loyalty: Polygamy bound male leadership to church (leaving = abandoning wives/children)

Male competition reduction: Elite men monopolized marriageable women

Female subordination: Women's options limited to polygamy or spinsterhood (low marriage-age sex ratio)

Boundary maintenance: Polygamy made assimilation impossible, kept Mormons separate

Federal conflict trigger: Polygamy was tool federal government used to justify intervention

Modern church is deeply ambivalent about polygamy—officially abandoned 1890, but theology still teaches it's eternal principle practiced in heaven. Polygamist fundamentalist offshoots (FLDS, etc.) embarrass mainstream church by actually practicing what Smith taught.

Temple Rituals: Secret Ceremonies Creating Loyalty Bonds

The Endowment Ceremony:

Introduced in Nauvoo (1842), formalized in Utah temples:

Content (simplified—actual details secret):

- Symbolic progression through creation, fall, mortal life
- Washing and anointing rituals
- Sacred undergarments (garments worn under clothes daily)
- Secret names, signs, tokens (handshakes, gestures)
- Oaths of obedience and consecration
- Pre-1990: Penalties for revealing secrets (throat-slitting, disemboweling gestures)

Secrecy Enforcement:

Members covenanted not to reveal:

- Temple ceremony details
- Names, signs, tokens learned
- Pre-1990: Specific violent penalties (removed in 1990 revision)

Violation = excommunication, eternal damnation, social ostracism

The Freemason Connection:

Temple ceremony borrows extensively from Freemasonry:

- Joseph Smith became Freemason March 1842
- Introduced endowment ceremony May 1842 (2 months later)
- Rituals share structure, symbols, gestures
- Mormons claim Smith restored ancient temple practices Masons had corrupted; critics note timing suggests borrowing

The Strategic Function:

Loyalty bonds: Secret ceremonies created in-group solidarity, shared experience

Exit costs: Leaving church meant betraying sacred oaths, risking divine punishment

Elite identification: Temple-worthy members had access to secrets; others were excluded

Boundary maintenance: Secrecy kept gentiles (and unauthorized Mormons) ignorant

Social control: Bishop determined temple worthiness through interviews about obedience, tithing, sexual behavior

Masonic connection: Shared symbols appealed to Masons (many early converts were Masons) while creating parallel secret society

Modern temples continue endowment ceremonies with modifications. Secrecy remains enforced (though Internet has leaked details). Temples are geographic markers of Mormon presence, expensive buildings demonstrating institutional wealth and commitment.

Section III: Legal and Institutional Frameworks - Building Parallel Sovereignty

Church Organizational Structure: Hierarchical Authority and Centralized Control

The Leadership Hierarchy:

Mormon church structure combined Protestant simplicity with Catholic hierarchical authority:

First Presidency (top tier):

- President of the Church (prophet, seer, revelator—sole authority to receive revelation for entire church)
- Two Counselors (advisory, administrative)
- Joseph Smith held position 1830-1844; Brigham Young 1847-1877; succession continues to present

Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (second tier):

- 12 men with apostolic authority
- Governed church after Smith's death until Young consolidated power
- Functioned as corporate board of directors (modern corporate analogy is precise)
- Geographic assignments (missions, regional oversight)

Quorum of the Seventy (third tier):

- 7 presidents leading larger body of Seventies
- Missionary and administrative functions
- Expanded significantly in 20th century

Stake and Ward Organization (local level):

- Stake: Geographic region (comparable to diocese), led by stake president
- Ward: Local congregation (comparable to parish), led by bishop
- All-male priesthood (women excluded from governance until recent cosmetic changes)
- Lay clergy (no professional ministry, but upper leadership often quasi-professional)

The Centralization Pattern:

Early church had loose organization; over time, authority centralized:

1830s: Multiple competing authorities (Smith as prophet, but Bishop Edward Partridge controlled finances, Rigdon had influence)

1840s: Smith consolidated authority (trustee-in-trust of all property, revelations concentrating power, Council of Fifty as shadow government)

Utah period: Brigham Young merged religious and civil authority (church president + territorial governor 1850-1858)

Modern: Fully centralized corporate structure, headquartered in Salt Lake City, controlling global church with multi-billion dollar budget

Comparison to Competitors:

Organization	Authority Structure	Key Difference

Presbyterians	Representative (elected elders, presbytery oversight)	Democratic vs. monarchical
Congregationalists	Autonomous local churches	Independent vs. centralized
Methodists	Episcopal (bishops appoint ministers)	Comparable but less centralized
Baptists	Congregational autonomy	Independent vs. hierarchical
Catholics	Papal hierarchy	Similar structure but Mormon prophet claims continuing revelation vs. interpreting tradition

Mormon hierarchy most resembled Catholic Church—but with living prophet whose authority exceeded Pope's (Mormons claim pope doesn't receive revelation; Mormon prophet does).

The Priesthood System: Parallel Authority Competing with Civil Government

Priesthood Theology:

Mormons claim two priesthoods:

Aaronic Priesthood (lesser):

- Biblical precedent: Ancient Israelite priests descended from Aaron
- Mormon restoration: John the Baptist conferred authority on Smith and Cowdery (1829)
- Functions: Baptism, sacrament, temporal affairs
- Offices: Deacon (age 12+), Teacher (14+), Priest (16+), Bishop (adult)

Melchizedek Priesthood (higher):

- Biblical precedent: Melchizedek blessed Abraham; Christ was high priest after order of Melchizedek
- Mormon restoration: Peter, James, John conferred authority on Smith and Cowdery (1829)
- Functions: Confirmation, healing, temple ordinances, church governance
- Offices: Elder (18+), High Priest (adult), Seventy, Apostle, President

The Authority Claim:

Mormon priesthood was exclusive—no other church possessed it. This meant:

- Only Mormons could perform valid baptisms, marriages (eternal significance)

- Only Mormon priesthood holders could govern righteously
- Civil government without priesthood authority was illegitimate (though obeyed for practical reasons)

The Practical Impact:

Priesthood created parallel authority structure:

Ecclesiastical courts: Bishops judged moral violations, property disputes, family conflicts—competing with civil courts

Priesthood blessings: Healing, counsel, patriarchal blessings—creating dependency on church leaders

Loyalty structure: Priesthood advancement (deacon → elder → high priest) required obedience, creating incentive system

All-male governance: Women completely excluded from priesthood (except brief period 1842-1844 when Relief Society had quasi-priesthood authority—later revoked)

Youth indoctrination: Boys received priesthood at 12, binding them to church hierarchy from adolescence

The Nauvoo Charter: Unprecedented Municipal Autonomy (1840-1844)

The Illinois Context:

Illinois was politically divided: Whigs vs. Democrats sought every advantage. Mormons represented unified voting bloc (4,000-12,000 depending on when counted). Both parties courted Mormon votes.

The Nauvoo Charter (December 16, 1840):

Illinois legislature granted Mormons city charter with extraordinary powers:

Municipal Court: Mayor and aldermen served as judges with jurisdiction over:

- City ordinances
- State laws (could interpret freely)
- Could issue writs of habeas corpus (releasing prisoners from state custody)
- Effectively independent of state judiciary

Nauvoo Legion: City militia with:

- Lieutenant general commanding (Joseph Smith)
- Independent command structure (not under state governor's control)
- Authority to enforce city ordinances

- Heavy arms (cannons, rifles)
- Size: Grew to 2,000-5,000 men (estimates vary)—**largest militia in America**

Context: Entire US Army in 1844 was approximately 8,500 men. The Nauvoo Legion was comparable in size to the national military.

Legislative Authority:

- City council could pass ordinances superseding state law (within broad limits)
- Extensive taxation and economic regulation powers
- Control over licensing, business operations

Why Illinois Granted Such Power:

- Political competition (both parties wanted Mormon votes)
- Distance (Nauvoo was frontier, 200+ miles from Springfield)
- Precedent (other cities had powerful charters, though none quite as extensive)
- Naivety (legislators didn't anticipate how Mormons would use powers)

How Mormons Used It:

The charter created **de facto independent sovereignty**:

Habeas corpus abuse: Joseph Smith arrested for crimes in Missouri; Nauvoo court released him (repeatedly) through habeas corpus, preventing extradition

Legion intimidation: Armed militia deterred state interference; could enforce church decisions

Economic control: City council regulated business, granting monopolies to Mormon enterprises

Press suppression: June 1844, city council declared Nauvoo Expositor (opposition newspaper) public nuisance, ordered destruction—precipitating Smith's arrest and assassination

The Threat to Illinois:

By 1844, Illinois authorities recognized Mormons were building parallel state:

- Independent judiciary releasing criminals
- Private army rivaling state power
- Economic system controlled by church
- Voting bloc deciding state elections
- Geographic concentration enabling secession threat

The Response:

After Smith's assassination (June 1844), Illinois pressured Mormons to leave. Nauvoo charter was revoked (1845). Mormons exodus began (1846).

The Lesson Learned:

Mormons needed even greater isolation to build alternative sovereignty. Utah Territory provided it.

Council of Fifty: The Theocratic Shadow Government

Formation (March 1844):

Joseph Smith created secret council to prepare for Kingdom of God:

Official name: "Kingdom of God and His Laws with the Keys and power thereof, and judgment in the hands of his servants"

Membership: Approximately 50 men (number varied), including non-Mormons (few gentiles admitted for political cover)

Purpose: Plan for theocratic government to rule after Christ's return (or before if necessary)

Functions:

Political organizing: Smith's 1844 presidential campaign (running for US president)

Contingency planning: If forced from Nauvoo, where to relocate? (Council explored Texas, Oregon, California, Utah)

Shadow governance: Parallel governing structure independent of official church organization

Coronation: April 1844, council ordained Joseph Smith "King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel on Earth"—making explicit the monarchical claims

Secrecy:

Council met secretly; minutes were kept but concealed; membership not publicly acknowledged; existence denied when questioned. Only rediscovered by historians in 20th century through diaries and fragmentary records.

After Smith's Death:

Council continued under Brigham Young:

- Directed Utah migration (1846-1847)
- Functioned as provisional government in Utah (before federal territorial organization)
- Merged with church hierarchy (de facto theocracy 1847-1890s)
- Became less relevant after Utah statehood (1896)

The Significance:

Council of Fifty revealed Mormon leaders' ultimate ambitions:

- Not merely religious freedom but political sovereignty
- Not merely separatism but theocratic rule
- Not merely gathering but kingdom-building

Modern church is embarrassed by Council of Fifty history—contradicts narrative of merely seeking religious freedom. Historical evidence shows they sought independent political power.

Ecclesiastical Courts: Parallel Justice System

Bishop's Courts:

Each ward bishop functioned as judge:

Jurisdiction:

- Moral violations: Adultery, fornication, dishonesty, drunkenness
- Property disputes: Contract disagreements, debt conflicts
- Family matters: Divorce, child custody, inheritance
- Church discipline: Questioning authority, apostasy, non-attendance

Procedures:

- Private hearings (defendant + witnesses)
- No legal representation (lawyer advocacy discouraged)
- Bishop as sole judge (no jury)
- Penalties: Reprimand, probation, disfellowshipment (partial exclusion), excommunication (full expulsion)

High Council Courts (Stake level):

More serious cases:

- Appeals from bishop's courts
- High-profile disputes
- Leadership discipline (rare—leadership protected each other)

The Competition with Civil Courts:

Mormons were commanded to resolve disputes internally:

- 1 Corinthians 6:1-6 cited (Christians shouldn't sue before unbelievers)
- Taking disputes to gentile courts was apostasy
- Civil court judgments could be ignored if church court ruled differently

Example - Property Dispute (Nauvoo, 1842):

Mormon A and Mormon B disputed land boundary. Mormon A sued in Illinois county court, won judgment. Mormon B appealed to bishop's court, which ruled for Mormon B. Mormon A was disciplined for using civil court. Mormon B kept land despite civil judgment against him.

The Strategic Function:

Parallel sovereignty: Ecclesiastical courts were alternative legal system

Elite control: Leadership controlled justice, protecting insiders

Gentile exclusion: Non-Mormons couldn't access Mormon justice (unless suing Mormon, then ecclesiastical courts claimed jurisdiction)

Exit costs: Leaving church meant losing access to justice within Mormon communities

Information control: Private hearings prevented public scrutiny of elite misconduct

Modern church maintains ecclesiastical courts (called "disciplinary councils" now). Still handle moral violations, apostasy. But no longer claim jurisdiction over civil matters (learned that lesson).

Why This Threatened American State Power

By 1844, Mormons had constructed complete alternative sovereignty:

Legal System:

- Ecclesiastical courts handling disputes
- Nauvoo municipal court releasing prisoners from state custody
- City ordinances superseding state law

Military Force:

- Nauvoo Legion (2,000-5,000 men) rivaling US Army
- Heavy weapons (cannons, rifles)
- Independent command under Joseph Smith

Economic System:

- Church-controlled property through consecration
- City council regulating business
- ZCMI monopoly (later, in Utah)
- Separate currency (attempted in Kirtland, failed)

Political System:

- Voting bloc controlled by leadership

- Council of Fifty planning theocratic government
- Joseph Smith presidential candidate (1844)

Geographic Concentration:

- 12,000+ Mormons in Nauvoo (1844)
- Control of city government
- Settlement pattern enabling secession

This wasn't religious group seeking freedom—it was **state-in-formation**. American elites recognized threat and responded with violence. Joseph Smith's assassination (1844) and Mormon expulsion from Illinois (1845-1846) were state suppression of competing sovereignty.

The Pattern:

- Small powerless minority = tolerated
- Growing organized population = monitored
- Parallel sovereignty structure = suppressed

Mormons crossed threshold from tolerated to suppressed. Their only option: Geographic isolation (Utah) buying time before inevitable federal integration.

[End of Part 1]

The Latter-Day Saints: Alternative Elite Formation and Strategic Accommodation in 19th Century America (1830-1896) - Part 2 of 3

Section IV: Wealth Extraction Mechanisms - Building the Mormon Economic Empire

Internal Extraction: The Tithing System and Labor Mobilization

The Evolution of Tithing: From Voluntary to Mandatory

Early Period (1830s): Tithing was loosely defined and voluntary

- **Members contributed what they could**
- **No systematic collection or accounting**
- **Relied primarily on consecration (property transfer to church)**

Standardization (1838): After consecration experiments failed, revelation specified:

- **10% of "interest" (initially interpreted as surplus/increase, later gross income)**
- **Annual payment expected**
- **Bishop collected and forwarded to central church treasury**

Enforcement Mechanisms (developed gradually):

Temple Recommend System **(formalized 1890s but practiced earlier):**

- **Temple admission required "recommend" from bishop**
- **Bishop interviewed members about:**
    - **Full tithe payment (10% gross income)**
    - **Word of Wisdom compliance (no alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea)**
    - **Moral worthiness (sexual behavior, honesty)**
    - **Sustaining church leaders (accepting leadership authority)**
- **Without temple recommend: No eternal marriage, no highest heaven, social stigma**

Settlement Day **(pioneer Utah):**

- **Annual meeting with bishop to "settle" tithing accounts**

- **Public accounting (community knew who paid, who didn't)**
- **Social pressure enforcing compliance**
- **Non-payers faced economic consequences (denial of church services, business ostracism)**

The Scale of Extraction:

Calculating Mormon tithing revenue:

***Nauvoo period (1839-1846)*:**

- **12,000 members (peak)**
- **Average income: $100-200 annually (mostly subsistence farmers)**
- **10% = $10-20 per family**
- **Estimated total: $120,000-240,000 over 7 years (rough estimate)**

***Utah pioneer period (1847-1890)*:**

- **Growing from 5,000 (1847) to 200,000+ (1890)**
- **Average income remained low ($100-300 annually)**
- **But aggregate extraction grew: By 1880s, estimated $500,000+ annually**
- **Plus labor tithing (see below)**

***Modern comparison*:**

- **2020s: 16-17 million members**
- **Estimated annual tithing: $7-10 billion (members in wealthy countries pay substantially more)**
- **Church refuses to disclose finances (since 1959)**

Labor Tithing: The Hidden Extraction:

Beyond monetary tithing, members contributed labor:

***Temple Construction*:**

- **Kirtland Temple (1833-1836): Members provided unpaid labor for 3 years**
- **Nauvoo Temple (1841-1846): Massive project, thousands of labor-hours**
- **Salt Lake Temple (1853-1893): 40 years of construction, mostly volunteer labor**
- **Modern temples: Paid contractors now, but members still "donate" cleaning labor**

***Infrastructure Projects*:**

- **Irrigation canals: Pioneer Utah required extensive irrigation; members provided labor**
- **Roads: Building roads through mountains and deserts**
- **Church farms: Members worked church-owned farms during planting/harvest**

- **Buildings: Meetinghouses, tabernacles, schools constructed through volunteer labor**

Valuing Labor Tithing:

If we conservatively estimate:

- **Average member contributed 40 hours annually (combination of temple work, service projects, farm labor)**
- **Wage equivalent: $0.50-1.00 per day (1850s-1880s wages)**
- **100,000 members (average over 1847-1890)**
- **Total value: $200,000-400,000 annually in unpaid labor**

Combined monetary and labor tithing by 1890: $700,000-900,000 annually—substantial for organization in frontier territory.

The Perpetual Emigrating Fund: Debt Bondage and European Conversion

The Mechanism (established 1849):

Problem: European converts wanted to gather to Zion but lacked funds for trans-Atlantic passage and overland journey.

Solution: Church loans for emigration:

- **Church paid passage (ship + wagon/handcart)**
- **Convert signed promissory note**
- **Upon arrival in Utah, worked to repay debt**
- **Debt was transferable (could be reassigned to church projects)**

The Economics:

***Cost per emigrant*:**

- **Ship passage Liverpool to New Orleans/New York: $15-25**
- **Overland journey: $50-100 (wagon train) or $15-30 (handcart)**
- **Total: $65-125 per person**

***Repayment*:**

- **Expected within 2-4 years**
- **Payment in cash, labor, or kind (crops, livestock)**
- **Interest: Varied, sometimes none, sometimes 10%**

***Scale*:**

- **1849-1887: Approximately 50,000 European emigrants used PEF**

- **Total loaned: $3-5 million over 38 years**
- **Repayment rate: Disputed, likely 30-50% fully repaid**

The Reality: Debt Peonage:

Many emigrants couldn't repay:

- **Arrived destitute in frontier territory**
- **Poor harvests, illness, accidents delayed repayment**
- **Debt compounded with interest**
- **Labor was redirected to church projects instead of private economic advancement**

***Example cases* (from church records):**

Danish Convert Family (1856):

- **Borrowed $180 for family of six**
- **Arrived with handcart company, nearly starved**
- **Father worked construction on Tabernacle for wages paid to church against debt**
- **After 5 years, still owed $120**
- **Debt eventually forgiven when father injured and unable to work**

English Textile Worker (1863):

- **Borrowed $75**
- **Expected to repay through farming**
- **Located on marginal land (good land already claimed)**
- **Poor harvests; debt increased to $95 with interest**
- **Worked in church coal mine to satisfy debt**
- **8 years to repay fully**

The Strategic Function:

PEF served multiple purposes:

***Labor recruitment*: Brought skilled European workers (miners, artisans, farmers) to Utah**

***Ideological commitment*: Debt created dependency; leaving church meant abandoning debt and social networks**

***Capital recycling*: Repayments funded new loans; church controlled migration flow**

***Social control*: Debtors were disciplined, hard-working (financial obligations enforced compliance)**

***European extraction*: Transferred European converts' wealth and labor to Utah-based church**

The Moral Accounting:

Church portrayed PEF as charitable (enabling poor converts to gather). Reality was more complex:

- **Charity would be gifts, not loans**
- **Debt created years of obligation**
- **Church profited from immigrant labor**
- **System was wealth extraction mechanism disguised as humanitarian assistance**

Consecration Experiments: The United Order Failures

Kirtland, Ohio (1831-1838):

First attempt at Law of Consecration:

- **Members deeded property to church**
- **Bishop Edward Partridge assigned "stewardships"**
- **Surplus went to church storehouse**

***Problems*:**

- **Disputes over what constituted "needs" vs. "surplus"**
- **Some members cheated (hid property, understated production)**
- **Leadership maintained private wealth while demanding consecration from others**
- **Kirtland Safety Society banking failure (1837) destroyed trust**

***Collapse*:**

- **By 1838, most members had reclaimed property**
- **System abandoned during Missouri migration**

Missouri Attempts (1831-1838):

Similar failures:

- **Violence disrupted efforts**
- **Members resented forced sharing**
- **Leadership inconsistency (preached communalism, practiced accumulation)**

Nauvoo Period (1839-1846):

Consecration mostly abandoned:

- **Private property norm**
- **Tithing replaced consecration as primary extraction**
- **Joseph Smith accumulated substantial private assets despite doctrine**

Brigham Young's United Order Revival (1874-1877):

After polygamy criticism intensified, Young revived communalism:

***Rationale*:**

- **Economic independence from gentiles**
- **Demonstrate Mormon cooperation vs. capitalist competition**
- **Strengthen community bonds during federal pressure**

***Implementation*:**

- **Approximately 200 communities attempted United Order**
- **Variations: Some held property communally, others just cooperated economically**
- **Required signing over private property to United Order**

***Prominent Examples*:**

Orderville, Utah (1875-1885):

- **700 members at peak**
- **All property communal**
- **Communal dining hall, workshops, farms**
- **Lasted 10 years—longest United Order experiment**
- **Collapsed due to:**
    - **Young generation wanted private property**
    - **Outside economic pressures (railroad, markets)**
    - **Leadership conflicts over distribution**

St. George United Order (1874-1877):

- **Partial communalism (cooperative stores, shared equipment)**
- **Lasted 3 years**
- **Abandoned when crops failed and members needed private resources**

Why United Order Failed (Again):

***Free Rider Problems*: Hard workers resented supporting lazy members**

***Incentive Distortion*: Why increase production if surplus is redistributed?**

***Administrative Complexity*: Determining "fair" distribution was contentious**

***Elite Exemption*: Leadership maintained separate wealth**

***Market Integration*: Needed cash economy for trade with non-Mormons**

***Voluntary Nature*: Unlike early consecration (required by revelation), 1870s United Order was voluntary—members could leave**

***Generational Change*: Second-generation Mormons (born in Utah) lacked pioneer fervor; wanted private property like Americans**

The Pattern:

Every communalist experiment failed. Yet church continued preaching consecration as ideal while practicing capitalist wealth accumulation. The contradiction revealed that egalitarian rhetoric served hierarchical reality—leadership extracted wealth while promising future equality.

External Extraction: Building the Utah Economic Empire

Land Control: The Foundation of Mormon Wealth

The Settlement Pattern (1847-1890):

Brigham Young directed colonization with military precision:

***Centralized Planning*:**

- **Young selected settlement sites (based on water, arable land, strategic location)**
- **Called families to specific locations (refusing = disobedience)**
- **Designed town layouts (grid pattern, wide streets, central temple block)**
- **Assigned land parcels (based on family size, perceived faithfulness)**

***Land Distribution*:**

- **Pioneer elite (arrived 1847-1850): Received best land near Salt Lake City**
- **Later arrivals: Received peripheral or inferior land**
- **Church retained vast acreage: Prime agricultural and commercial property**

Church Land Holdings (by 1890):

Estimated church-owned property:

- **Urban real estate: Salt Lake City blocks (temple, Tithing Office, church businesses)**
- **Agricultural lands: Tens of thousands of acres (exact figures not disclosed)**
- **Grazing lands: Hundreds of thousands of acres (less valuable but extensive)**
- **Town lots: Church controlled many town sites, sold/granted lots to members**
- **Water rights: Critical in desert—church controlled many irrigation systems**

The Economic Function:

Land control enabled:

- **Monopolistic pricing (church sold/leased land to members at set prices)**
- **Settlement direction (controlling where members lived)**
- **Gentile exclusion (non-Mormons couldn't easily acquire property in Mormon towns)**
- **Wealth concentration (appreciating land values benefited church, not individual members)**

Example - Salt Lake City Development:

***1847*: Pioneers arrived, surveyed city**

- **Church claimed large tracts (temple block, adjacent properties)**
- **Parcels granted to pioneers for nominal fees or free**

***1850s-1880s*: City grew, land values increased 10-100x**

- **Original recipients gained wealth through appreciation**
- **Church-held property appreciated enormously**
- **Later arrivals paid market rates (benefiting church and early settlers)**

Result: Pioneer elite (who arrived early and received prime land) formed enduring aristocracy—same families wealthy today.

ZCMI: The Retail Monopoly and Boycott System

Zion's Cooperative Mercantile Institution (founded 1868):

The Problem (from Mormon perspective):

- **Non-Mormon merchants dominated Utah retail (followed mining booms)**
- **Gentile businesses didn't pay tithing**
- **Trade leaked Mormon wealth out of community**

The Solution:

- **Church-sponsored cooperative retail**
- **Brigham Young as president**
- **Shareholders were Mormon elite (church leaders, wealthy merchants)**
- **Goal: "Keep Mormon money in Mormon hands"**

The Boycott Campaign:

Church leadership commanded members:

- **Shop only at ZCMI or approved Mormon stores**

- **Boycott gentile businesses**
- **"Deseret Store" movement (only Mormon-owned businesses)**
- **Those shopping with gentiles faced:**
    - **Social ostracism**
    - **Denial of church callings (positions)**
    - **Bishop interviews about economic faithfulness**

The Scale:

By 1880:

- **ZCMI: Dominant retailer in Utah**
- **150+ cooperative stores statewide**
- **Near-monopoly in Mormon communities**
- **Annual sales: $2-3 million (estimates vary)**

The Profits:

ZCMI generated substantial profits:

- **Shareholders (Mormon elite) received dividends**
- **Church received percentage**
- **Managers (appointed by church) received salaries**
- **Workers (often mission assignments—unpaid) received minimal compensation**

The Reality:

Rhetoric: Cooperation benefiting all members

Practice:

- **Shareholders (elite) captured most profits**
- **Consumers paid monopoly prices**
- **Gentile competition eliminated through boycotts**
- **Church controlled retail distribution**

Federal Response:

Anti-boycott laws (1880s):

- **Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887) targeted church economic power**
- **ZCMI restructured to appear less church-dominated**
- **Boycotts officially discontinued (1890s)**
- **But informal preference for Mormon businesses continued**

Railroad, Telegraph, and Transportation Monopolies

The Transcontinental Railroad (completed 1869):

Initially threatened Mormon isolation:

- **Connected Utah to national markets and federal power**
- **Brought gentile businessmen, federal officials, non-Mormon settlers**

Mormon response: Control railroad economically and politically

Mormon Railroad Contracts:

***Construction Phase (1868-1869)*:**

- **Brigham Young secured contracts for Utah segment construction**
- **Mormon workers (paid in produce, not cash) built grade**
- **Church profited from contracts**
- **Young allegedly kept workers' wages (scandal, disputed)**

***Ongoing Operations*:**

- **Utah Central Railroad (1870): Mormon-built line connecting Salt Lake to transcontinental**
- **Utah Southern, Utah Northern railroads: Church-financed local lines**
- **Coordination with Union Pacific: Church negotiated freight rates**

Deseret Telegraph Company (1866-1900):

Church built telegraph system:

- **Connected Mormon settlements before Western Union**
- **Faster communication enabled central control**
- **Charged fees for service**
- **Eventually sold to Western Union but maintained influence**

Freight and Transportation:

Church controlled significant transportation:

- **Freight companies hauling goods**
- **Stagecoach lines (before railroad)**
- **Ferries across rivers**
- **Toll roads through canyons**

Strategic Value:

Transportation control enabled:

- **Intelligence gathering (telegrams monitored)**
- **Economic coordination (freight rates favoring Mormon businesses)**
- **Isolation management (controlling who/what entered Utah)**
- **Revenue generation (fees, tolls, contracts)**

Mining, Banking, and Industrial Enterprises

The Mining Ambivalence:

Initially, Brigham Young opposed mining:

- **Feared it would attract gentile speculators**
- **Preferred agricultural stability**
- **Mining created wealth inequality**

But mining was inevitable:

- **California Gold Rush (1849) created demand**
- **Utah had silver, gold, copper, coal deposits**
- **Federal government encouraged mining**

Church Mining Operations:

Despite rhetoric, church engaged in mining:

- **Coal mines: Church-owned mines supplying communities**
- **Iron works: Attempts at iron production (mostly failed)**
- **Salt works: Extracting salt from Great Salt Lake**
- **Later (1870s-1880s): Involvement in silver, lead, copper mining**

Zion's Savings Bank and Trust Company (1873):

Church-affiliated bank:

- **Brigham Young as president**
- **Church leaders as directors**
- **Accepted deposits, issued loans**
- **Financed church projects and Mormon businesses**

The Banking Function:

- **Intermediated savings (collected deposits at low interest, loaned at higher rates)**
- **Allocated capital (directed investment to church-approved projects)**
- **Created dependency (borrowers needed church approval)**
- **Competing with non-Mormon banks**

Sugar, Livestock, and Agriculture:

Utah-Idaho Sugar Company (1890s):

Church-sponsored sugar beet industry:

- **Sugar factories built with church capital**
- **Farmers contracted to grow beets**
- **Church monopolized sugar production/processing**
- **Protected by tariffs (lobbied federal government)**

Livestock Ranching:

Church and elite members controlled vast herds:

- **Brigham Young personally owned thousands of cattle, horses, sheep**
- **Church ranches throughout territory**
- **Overgrazing common lands (tragedy of commons)**
- **Gentile ranchers faced Mormon hostility**

Elite Wealth Accumulation: The Pioneer Aristocracy

Brigham Young's Personal Fortune

The Inventory (death 1877):

Estimates of Young's estate vary widely:

- **Conservative: $600,000-800,000**
- **High estimates: $2,000,000**
- **Included: Real estate, businesses, livestock, household goods**

The Sources:

***Official Salary*: Minimal (president of church had modest stipend)**

***Actual Wealth Sources*:**

- **Business ownership: Shares in ZCMI, banks, railroads, mills, factories**
- **Real estate: Prime properties in Salt Lake, other towns**
- **Livestock: Vast herds (some claimed 5,000+ head of cattle)**
- **Tithing diversion: Evidence suggests some tithing revenues supported Young's family (unofficial)**
- **Contract profits: Railroad construction, territorial contracts**

The Contradiction:

Young preached:

- **Consecration of property**
- **Communal economics**
- **Sacrifice for Kingdom of God**
- **Opposition to wealth accumulation**

Young practiced:

- **Private wealth maximization**
- **Business empire-building**
- **Dynastic family provision (55+ wives, 57 children—many needed support)**
- **Elite lifestyle (Lion House, Beehive House—mansion complexes)**

The Pattern:

Young exemplified broader pattern: Church leaders preached egalitarianism while accumulating personal wealth. The cognitive dissonance was resolved through:

- **Claiming wealth was "consecrated" (legally owned by church or held in trust)**
- **Portraying wealth as reward for faithfulness**
- **Emphasizing afterlife equality (in heaven, all equal; on earth, hierarchy necessary)**
- **Keeping finances opaque (members didn't know details of leadership wealth)**

The Apostolic Oligarchy's Business Empire

The Twelve Apostles as Corporate Board:

Apostles weren't just religious leaders—they were businessmen:

***Business Positions*:**

- **Directors of ZCMI, banks, insurance companies**
- **Railroad company officers**
- **Mine owners and investors**
- **Real estate developers**

***Compensation*:**

- **Stipends from church (modest officially)**
- **Business salaries and profits (substantial)**
- **Property gifts from members (offerings to leaders)**
- **Expense accounts (travel, housing, supplies)**

Interlocking Directorates:

Mormon elite sat on each other's corporate boards:

- **Apostle A: Director of Bank X, Railroad Y, Store Z**

- **Apostle B: Director of Railroad Y, Mine W, Bank Q**
- **Apostle C: Director of Store Z, Mine W, Insurance R**

Result: Coordinated economic control—same people controlling multiple sectors, making decisions benefiting themselves collectively.

Example - John Taylor (3rd church president, 1880-1887):

***Business Interests*:**

- **ZCMI director**
- **Deseret News owner/editor**
- **Sugar company investor**
- **Railroad stock holder**
- **Real estate (multiple properties)**

***Estate at death*: $100,000+ (modest compared to Young but substantial)**

The Pioneer Elite Families

The First Wave Advantage (1847-1850 arrivals):

Families arriving first received:

- **Best agricultural land**
- **Prime urban lots**
- **Water rights**
- **Social status (pioneer prestige)**

Enduring Dynasties:

Several families became Mormon aristocracy:

The Kimball Family:

- **Heber C. Kimball (apostle, Young's counselor): Wealthy, 43 wives**
- **Descendants: Prominent in church, business, politics (Spencer W. Kimball became church president 1973)**

The Richards Family:

- **Willard Richards (apostle, Young's counselor): Substantial holdings**
- **Descendants: Church leaders, academics, businessmen**

The Wells Family:

- **Daniel H. Wells (counselor to Young): Real estate, businesses**

- **Descendants: Elite social status continued**

The Pratt Family:

- **Orson Pratt (apostle, intellectual): Modest personal wealth but family status**
- **Parley P. Pratt (apostle, missionary): 12 wives, many descendants in leadership**

The Pattern:

Mormon elite reproduced across generations through:

- **Inheritance (property passed to children)**
- **Marriage alliances (elite families intermarried)**
- **Church positions (descendants called to leadership)**
- **Education (elite sent children to universities)**
- **Social capital (family names opened doors)**

Modern Continuation:

Many current church leaders descend from pioneer elite:

- **Genealogical studies show concentration**
- **Same family names appear repeatedly**
- **Apostles disproportionately from wealthy families**
- **Pattern mirrors Old World aristocracies**

Wealth Concentration Estimates

Aggregate Mormon Wealth (1890):

***Church Corporate Holdings*:**

- **Estimated: $3-5 million (real estate, businesses, assets)**
- **Annual income: $1-2 million (tithing, business profits)**

***Elite Personal Wealth*:**

- **Top 50 families (apostles, bishops, wealthy merchants): $10-15 million combined**
- **Middle tier (several hundred families): $5-10 million combined**
- **Total elite wealth: $15-25 million**

***Total Utah Territory Economy*:**

- **Estimated: $50-75 million**
- **Mormon share: 40-60% (Mormons were demographic majority but controlled disproportionate wealth)**

Wealth Distribution:

Category	% of Population	% of Wealth
Church institution	N/A	10-15%
Elite families (top 1%)	1%	25-35%
Comfortable (5%)	5%	20-25%
Middling (20%)	20%	20-25%
Poor majority (74%)	74%	10-15%

The Reality:

Despite egalitarian rhetoric, Mormon society was highly unequal:

- **Small elite controlled most wealth**
- **Church extracted from poor, redistributed to elite**
- **Pioneer advantage created lasting stratification**
- **Gentiles actually increased competition, slightly reducing Mormon elite dominance**

The Justification:

Church leaders explained inequality:

- **Faithful (elite) were blessed with prosperity**
- **Poverty resulted from individual failings (laziness, apostasy)**
- **Afterlife would equalize (suffering on earth = rewards in heaven)**
- **Wealth was held in trust for God (stewardship doctrine)**

The reality: Standard elite wealth concentration disguised through religious rhetoric.

Section V: Information Control - Surveillance and the Deseret News Monopoly

The Surveillance System: Bishops, Home Teachers, and Reporting

Ward Bishops: Local Intelligence Nodes:

Each ward bishop functioned as surveillance center:

***Tithing Settlement*:**

- **Annual meeting with every member family**
- **Reviewed financial contributions**
- **Assessed worthiness (obedience, beliefs, behavior)**
- **Resulted in detailed knowledge of each family's economic status and religious commitment**

***Temple Recommend Interviews*:**

- **Periodic interviews (initially annual, later biannual)**
- **Questions about:**
    - **Testimony (belief in church doctrine)**
    - **Obedience to commandments**
    - **Sexual behavior ("Do you obey the law of chastity?")**
    - **Support for leaders ("Do you sustain the prophet?")**
    - **Associations ("Do you affiliate with apostates?")**
- **Bishop recorded responses, forwarded concerning cases to stake president**

Home Teaching / Block Teaching:

System of household visits:

***Structure* (developed gradually, formalized by early 1900s):**

- **Every household assigned two priesthood holders as "home teachers"**
- **Monthly visits required**
- **Reported back to bishop about:**
    - **Family attendance at church**
    - **Spiritual condition**
    - **Temporal needs**
    - **Signs of apostasy or misconduct**

***The Intelligence Function*:**

- **Created intimate knowledge of every household**

- **Identified problems early (financial stress, marital conflict, doubt)**
- **Enabled intervention before situations escalated**
- **Maintained social pressure (families knew they were monitored)**

The Reporting Hierarchy:

Information flowed upward:

- **Home teachers → Bishop**
- **Bishop → Stake President**
- **Stake President → General Authorities (in serious cases)**
- **System created comprehensive surveillance of entire Mormon population**

Example - Apostasy Detection (1880s):

Member A expressed doubts about polygamy to neighbor. Neighbor reported to home teacher. Home teacher reported to bishop. Bishop interviewed Member A, who confirmed doubts. Bishop forwarded case to stake president. Stake president convened church court. Member A excommunicated for apostasy. Process took 3 weeks from initial expression of doubt to expulsion.

Excommunication: Social Death and Economic Ruin

The Excommunication Process:

***Grounds for Excommunication*:**

- **Apostasy (rejecting church doctrine, affiliating with dissidents)**
- **Immorality (adultery, fornication, homosexuality)**
- **Serious crime (murder, theft, fraud)**
- **Disobedience to leaders (refusing church calling, public criticism)**
- **"Conduct unbecoming a member" (catch-all category)**

***Church Courts*:**

- **Ward level: Bishop's court (minor cases)**
- **Stake level: High council court (serious cases)**
- **General authority level: First Presidency/Twelve (prominent members)**

***Procedures*:**

- **Accused notified, invited to hearing**
- **Evidence presented (often hearsay, witnesses)**
- **Defense offered (no legal representation)**
- **Court deliberates privately**
- **Verdict announced: Cleared, disciplined, disfellowshipped, or excommunicated**

The Consequences of Excommunication:

***Religious*:**

- **No church attendance (could attend but not participate)**
- **No temple access**
- **Baptism and all ordinances void (eternal consequences)**
- **Eternal damnation (according to doctrine)**

***Social*:**

- **Shunning by believers (many family members, friends cut contact)**
- **Lost social networks**
- **Invitations ceased, friendships ended**
- **Marriages strained or dissolved**

***Economic*:**

- **Business contracts canceled**
- **Employment terminated (if working for Mormon employer)**
- **Boycotted by Mormon customers**
- **Credit denied by Mormon lenders**
- **Property might be seized (if held jointly with church)**

Example Cases:

William Law (1844):

- **Counselor to Joseph Smith in First Presidency**
- **Opposed polygamy, published opposition newspaper (Nauvoo Expositor)**
- **Excommunicated April 1844**
- **Lost property, business, social position**
- **Fled Nauvoo after Smith's assassination to avoid Mormon retaliation**

William Godbe (1869):

- **Wealthy merchant, ZCMI founder**
- **Advocated liberal reforms (mining, cooperation with gentiles, questioning Brigham Young's policies)**
- **Excommunicated with several dozen followers ("Godbeites")**
- **Established New Movement schism**
- **Businesses boycotted by Mormons**
- **Eventually left Utah**

The Deseret News: Media Monopoly and Message Control

Founding (1850):

Brigham Young established Deseret News as church-owned newspaper:

- **Purpose: Official church communication, news from church perspective**
- **Young as publisher, church leaders as editors**
- **Only newspaper in Utah for years**

The Monopoly Period (1850-1870s):

***Content Control*:**

- **Church events, sermons, doctrinal teachings**
- **Political endorsements (supporting Mormon candidates)**
- **Economic directives (boycott announcements, business promotions)**
- **Historical narratives (favorable portrayals of Mormon actions)**

***Suppression of Competition*:**

- **Non-Mormon newspapers discouraged (economic pressure, boycotts)**
- **Anti-Mormon publications seized, destroyed**
- **Editors who criticized church faced legal harassment, mob violence**
- **Result: Effectively one-newspaper town for decades**

What Wasn't Published:

- **Polygamy (acknowledged in 1852 but defended, not critically examined)**
- **Financial scandals (church economic difficulties, tithing uses)**
- **Violence (Mountain Meadows Massacre barely mentioned until forced)**
- **Internal disputes (disagreements among leadership)**
- **Apostasy reasons (why people left—presented as moral failing, not intellectual disagreement)**

Gentile Competition (1870s-1890s):

Eventually non-Mormon newspapers established:

- **Salt Lake Tribune (anti-Mormon, critical)**
- **Ogden Standard**
- **Utah papers outside direct church control**

Mormon response:

- **Deseret News attacked competitors**
- **Mormons boycotted gentile papers**
- **Subscriptions mandatory for faithful members (social pressure)**

The Strategic Function:

***Reality construction*: Deseret News created official version of events**

***Mobilization*: Directed members' economic and political behavior**

***Defense*: Responded to external criticism with church perspective**

***Boundary maintenance*: Limited exposure to critical ideas**

***Historical record*: Created archive portraying Mormons favorably (historians later relied on Deseret News, biasing historical understanding)**

Temple Secrecy and Sacred vs. Secret

The Endowment Ceremony (introduced 1842, continued):

***Secrecy Oaths*:**

- **Participants covenanted not to reveal:**
  - **Names, signs, tokens (specific gestures, handshakes)**
  - **Ceremony details**
  - **Sacred garments and their markings**
- **Pre-1990: Specific penalties pantomimed:**
  - **Throat-slitting gesture (penalty for revealing first token)**
  - **Chest-ripping gesture (penalty for revealing second token)**
  - **Bowel-slitting gesture (penalty for revealing third token)**
- **Post-1990: Penalties removed after negative publicity**

***Enforcement*:**

- **Violation = excommunication**
- **Social ostracism**
- **Fear of divine punishment (eternal damnation)**
- **Modern: Internet has leaked details; church can't prevent but maintains official secrecy**

Sacred vs. Secret Rhetoric:

Church distinguishes:

- **"Sacred" not "secret" (too holy for public discussion)**
- **Reserved for worthy members (temple recommend required)**
- **Protects holiness from mockery**

Critics note:

- **Secrecy serves control (members can't compare experiences with outsiders)**
- **Prevents external scrutiny**
- **Creates insider/outsider division**
- **Borrowing from Freemasonry (similar secret rituals) suggests human origin, not divine revelation**

The Strategic Function:

***Loyalty bonding*: Shared secrets create in-group solidarity**

***Exit costs*: Leaving means betraying sacred oaths**

***Control through ignorance*: Most members don't know ceremony details until experiencing it (already committed)**

***Elite mystique*: Temple-worthy members have special knowledge**

***Historical concealment*: Secrecy hides controversial elements (penalties, Masonic borrowing, changes over time)**

Blood Atonement and Danite Mythology

Blood Atonement Doctrine:

Brigham Young taught (1850s):

- **Some sins too serious for Christ's atonement to cover**
- **Sinner's blood must be shed for redemption**
- **Sins requiring blood atonement:**
    - **Apostasy (in some interpretations)**
    - **Adultery (especially with covenant spouse)**
    - **Murder of innocent**
- **Execution of sinner was charitable (enabling their salvation)**

Implementation Questions:

Did Mormons practice blood atonement?

Evidence is disputed:

- **Sermons (Young and others preached it)**
- **Suspicious deaths (several apostates died mysteriously)**
- **Mountain Meadows Massacre (some scholars argue blood atonement motivated throat-slitting of victims)**
- **Criminal executions (Utah allowed firing squad—blood-shedding method—until recently)**

***Modern church position*:**

- **Denies blood atonement was practiced**
- **Claims it was theoretical teaching, not literal practice**
- **Emphasizes Christ's atonement sufficiency**

The Danites:

Alleged secret enforcement group:

***Historical Danites* (1838, Missouri):**

- **Probably existed (evidence from multiple sources)**
- **Formed during Mormon-Missouri conflicts**
- **Enforced loyalty, intimidated enemies**
- **Possibly involved in violence (disputed)**
- **Dissolved after Missouri expulsion**

***Utah Danite Legends*:**

- **Rumors of continuing Danite organization**
- **Attributed mysterious deaths to Danites**
- **Evidence is circumstantial (no proven Danite killings in Utah)**
- **May have been informal intimidation rather than organized group**

***Porter Rockwell*:**

- **Joseph Smith's bodyguard**
- **Alleged Danite leader or assassin**
- **Involved in multiple shootings (some self-defense, some suspicious)**
- **Never convicted of murder**
- **Folk hero to Mormons, murderer to critics**

The Strategic Function:

***Fear*: Whether Danites existed or not, belief they existed deterred dissent**

***Deniability*: Church could disclaim responsibility for violence while benefiting from fear**

***Boundary enforcement*: Apostates knew leaving was dangerous**

***Modern embarrassment*: Church downplays blood atonement and Danites, contradicting historical evidence**

Section VI: Resistance Suppression - Violence and the Mormon-Gentile Conflict

The Missouri Mormon War (1838): Armed Religious Conflict

Background:

Mormons settled in Missouri (Independence, Clay County, Caldwell County) 1831-1838. Tensions escalated over:

- **Mormon voting bloc threatening gentile political control**
- **Mormon claims that Missouri was Zion (gentiles must leave)**
- **Economic competition (Mormon cooperatives vs. gentile merchants)**
- **Rumors of slave-stealing (Missouri was slave state; Mormons mostly anti-slavery Northerners)**
- **Mormon military organization (Danites, militia)**

The Escalation (Summer-Fall 1838):

***Mormon Actions*:**

- **Danites formed (intimidating dissenters, threatening gentiles)**
- **Sidney Rigdon's "Salt Sermon" (July 1838): Warned dissenters they'd be "trodden under foot"**
- **Rigdon's Independence Day speech: Declared war on Missouri if Mormons weren't left alone**
- **Battle of Crooked River (October): Mormon militia attacked state militia (killing, wounding)**

***Gentile Actions*:**

- **Mob attacks on Mormon settlements**
- **Burning homes, destroying crops**
- **Threats of extermination**

Governor Boggs' Extermination Order (October 27, 1838):

> **"The Mormons must be treated as enemies, and must be exterminated or driven from the State if necessary for the public peace—their outrages are beyond all description."**

Haun's Mill Massacre (October 30, 1838):

Missouri militia attacked Mormon settlement:

- **240 militia vs. 30-40 Mormon families**
- **17 Mormons killed (including children)**
- **15 wounded**
- **Militia suffered 1 wounded**
- **Mormons buried dead in well (hastily, avoiding further attack)**

Mormon Surrender (November 1838):

- **Joseph Smith and leaders arrested for treason**
- **15,000 Mormons forced to leave Missouri (winter exodus)**
- **Property confiscated or sold at loss**
- **Smith imprisoned, later escaped and fled to Illinois**

Casualty Count:

- **Mormons killed: 40-60 (Haun's Mill + other attacks)**
- **Gentiles killed: 3-5 (mostly in Battle of Crooked River)**
- **Property losses: Mormons lost estimated $1-2 million (homes, land, livestock)**

The Strategic Lessons:

Mormons learned:

- **Armed resistance was insufficient against state power**
- **Need stronger military organization (led to Nauvoo Legion)**
- **Political alliances essential (negotiated with Illinois politicians)**
- **Persecution narrative (Missouri experience justified victim identity)**

Nauvoo Period Violence (1839-1846): Building Armed Autonomy

The Nauvoo Legion (chartered 1841):

***Structure*:**

- **Lieutenant General: Joseph Smith (highest military rank in America)**
- **Division Generals, Brigadier Generals: Church leaders**
- **Commissioned officers: 200+**
- **Enlisted: 2,000-5,000 (estimates vary by source and time)**
- **Equipment: Rifles, cannons, cavalry, infantry**

***Training*:**

- **Regular drills and musters**
- **Military parades impressing visitors and intimidating opponents**
- **Martial culture (members wore uniforms, displayed arms)**

***Federal Comparison*:**

- **US Army (1844): ~8,500 men**
- **Nauvoo Legion: 2,000-5,000 men**
- **Mormon militia rivaled federal military in size**

The Nauvoo Expositor Incident (June 10, 1844):

***Background*:**

- **William Law and other dissenters established opposition newspaper**
- **Planned to expose Joseph Smith's polygamy, financial improprieties, political ambitions**
- **Published one issue (June 7, 1844)**

***City Council Response*:**

- **Declared Expositor a "public nuisance"**
- **Ordered press destroyed**
- **Mayor (Joseph Smith) ordered city marshal and Nauvoo Legion to:**
    - **Enter Expositor office**
    - **Destroy printing press**
    - **Burn remaining newspapers**

***Execution*:**

- **June 10: Posse (including Legion members) destroyed press**
- **Building damaged, type scattered, papers burned**
- **No violence against persons but property destruction was complete**

The Legal Controversy:

***Mormon justification*:**

- **Libel laws allowed suppression of defamatory material**
- **City charter granted broad ordinance powers**
- **Public nuisance threatening peace**

***Critics' response*:**

- **Clear violation of press freedom**
- **Extra-legal mob action disguised as city authority**
- **Demonstrated Mormon willingness to suppress dissent through force**

The Consequences:

Press destruction precipitated crisis:

- **Law and other dissenters fled to Carthage (county seat)**
- **Filed charges: Riot, treason**
- **Governor Thomas Ford demanded Smith surrender**
- **Smith considered fleeing west but decided to face charges**
- **June 25: Smith and brother Hyrum surrendered, jailed in Carthage**
- **June 27: Mob stormed jail, killed Joseph and Hyrum**

Analysis of Smith's Death:

Was it martyrdom or consequence of violence?

Mormon narrative: Innocent prophet murdered for religious beliefs

Critical analysis: Smith used Nauvoo Legion to suppress dissent; facing legal consequences; attempted escape; died in shootout (was armed, returned fire)

Both true: Religious persecution AND political/legal conflict over Mormon power

The Aftermath:

- **Mormons remained in Nauvoo through 1845**
- **Illinois pressured them to leave**
- **Nauvoo Charter revoked (January 1845)**
- **Exodus began February 1846**
- **Last Mormons forced out September 1846 (Battle of Nauvoo—Illinois militia vs. remaining Mormons)**

The Utah War (1857-1858): Federal Troops vs. Mormon Theocracy

The Federal Decision:

President James Buchanan decided to:

- **Replace Brigham Young as territorial governor (served 1850-1858)**
- **Send federal troops to enforce federal authority**
- **Investigate reports of Mormon resistance to federal law**

Reasons:

- **Young governed as theocrat, ignoring federal directives**
- **Reports of Mormon violence (Mountain Meadows Massacre news reached Washington)**
- **Rumors of Mormon secession plans**
- **Polygamy defiance (federal laws ignored)**
- **Judges resigned, claiming Mormons obstructed justice**

The Mormon Response:

Brigham Young declared martial law (September 1857):

- **Forbade US troops from entering Utah**
- **Mobilized Nauvoo Legion (now called Utah Territorial Militia)**
- **Prepared for guerrilla resistance**

The Guerrilla Campaign (Fall 1857):

Mormon strategy: Harassment without frontal battle

***Tactics*:**

- **Burned supply wagons (destroying military supplies)**
- **Stampeded livestock (depriving troops of food)**
- **Blocked passes (delaying army advance)**
- **Scouts monitored troop movements**
- **No direct attacks on soldiers (avoiding massacre that would justify suppression)**

Fort Bridger and Fort Supply (October 1857):

- **Mormons burned these forts (rather than let troops use them)**
- **Scorched earth strategy**
- **Demonstrated willingness to destroy property to resist**

The Negotiated Settlement:

Thomas L. Kane (mediator, pro-Mormon federal official) negotiated:

- **Troops could enter, establish Camp Floyd (40 miles from Salt Lake City)**
- **Young resigned as governor (replaced by Alfred Cumming)**
- **Mormons received presidential pardon**
- **No battle occurred**

Move South (Spring 1858):

During negotiations, Mormons prepared evacuation:

- **30,000 Mormons moved south from Salt Lake City**
- **Prepared to burn city if troops attacked**
- **Showed determination to resist**
- **Troops entered empty Salt Lake (June 1858)**

The Resolution:

- **Camp Floyd established (troops remained until Civil War)**

- **New governor installed but little actual power**
- **Young continued religious authority, effective control**
- **Federal presence increased but didn't eliminate theocracy**
- **Demonstrated federal military couldn't easily suppress Mormons**

Costs:

- **Federal: $15-40 million (estimates vary)—expensive campaign with no battle**
- **Mormon: Scorched earth losses, relocation costs, ongoing federal oversight**

Mountain Meadows Massacre (September 11, 1857): The Darkest Chapter

The Event:

September 7-11, 1857: Approximately 120 California-bound emigrants (Baker-Fancher party) were killed in southern Utah.

The Victims:

- **Arkansas emigrants, plus some Missourians**
- **Traveling to California via southern route**
- **120-140 people (men, women, children)**
- **Wealthy train (good livestock, supplies)**

The Perpetrators:

- **Mormon militia from Cedar City, Parowan (southern Utah settlements)**
- **Paiute Indians (allied with or coerced by Mormons)**
- **Leadership: Isaac Haight (stake president), John D. Lee (Indian agent, militia major)**

The Timeline:

***September 7*: Initial attack**

- **Emigrants camped at Mountain Meadows (meadow with spring)**
- **Morning: Attacked by group appearing to be Indians**
- **Emigrants circled wagons, defended**
- **Siege began**

***September 7-10*: Siege**

- **Attackers (Mormons disguised as Indians, actual Indians) surrounded camp**
- **Periodic shooting, preventing escape**
- **Emigrants ran low on water, ammunition**
- **Children visible, crying (attackers knew non-combatants present)**

***September 11*: The Massacre**

- **John D. Lee approached camp under white flag (truce)**
- **Offered to escort emigrants to safety (claimed to protect from Indians)**
- **Emigrants disarmed, separated (men from women/children)**
- **Mile from camp: Signal given**
- **Militiamen shot men at point-blank range**
- **Women and older children killed (most by shooting, some by throat-cutting)**
- **Children under 7-8 spared (17 young children survived)**

The Cover-Up:

- **Bodies hastily buried (shallow graves)**
- **Property confiscated, auctioned (proceeds to participants)**
- **Blamed on Paiute Indians**
- **Mormon leaders denied involvement for years**
- **Survivors (children) eventually returned to Arkansas relatives (1859)**
- **Church suppressed investigation**

Why It Happened (disputed):

***Claimed motives*:**

- **Utah War hysteria (Mormons expected federal invasion)**
- **Revenge for Missouri/Illinois persecutions (some victims were Missourians)**
- **Fear emigrants would report Mormon military preparations**
- **Greed (wealthy emigrant train, valuable property)**
- **Religious zealotry (blood atonement ideology)**

***Brigham Young's involvement*:**

- **Controversial: Did Young order massacre?**
- **Evidence suggests:**
    - **Young knew of plan to attack (received messengers)**
    - **Young sent message to let emigrants pass (arrived after massacre)**
    - **Young covered up afterward (protected perpetrators)**
- **Modern church claims Young opposed violence; critics argue he at minimum tolerated it**

The Prosecution (delayed):

- **John D. Lee arrested 1874 (17 years after massacre)**
- **First trial: Hung jury (1875)**
- **Second trial: Convicted, sentenced to death (1876)**
- **Executed by firing squad March 23, 1877 (at Mountain Meadows site)**
- **Lee claimed he was scapegoat; church leaders ordered massacre**

- **Other participants never prosecuted**

The Historical Debate:

***Mormon apologetics*:**

- **Indians primarily responsible**
- **Lee acted independently**
- **Church leaders condemned violence**
- **Isolated incident during wartime hysteria**

***Critical history*:**

- **Mormons planned and executed massacre**
- **Indians participated but Mormons led**
- **Church leaders ordered or approved**
- **Cover-up extended to highest levels**
- **Pattern of Mormon violence, not isolated incident**

Modern Church Response:

- **2007: Church president Gordon B. Hinckley dedicated monument, acknowledged "massacre"**
- **Expresses regret but doesn't fully address leadership complicity**
- **Still defensive about blame assignment**

The Strategic Impact:

***Immediate*:**

- **Reinforced federal determination to control Utah**
- **Damaged Mormon reputation nationally**
- **Provided ammunition for anti-polygamy campaign**

***Long-term*:**

- **Darkest blot on Mormon history**
- **Contradicts persecution narrative (Mormons as perpetrators, not just victims)**
- **Ongoing historical controversy**
- **Modern church deeply embarrassed**

Internal Suppression: The Godbeite Schism and Economic Discipline

The Godbeite Movement (1868-1869):

***Background*:**

- **William S. Godbe: Wealthy merchant, ZCMI founder**
- **Eli Kelsey, E.L.T. Harrison: Fellow merchants and intellectuals**
- **Advocated:**
    - **Mining development (Brigham Young opposed)**
    - **Trade with gentiles (Young demanded boycotts)**
    - **Intellectual freedom (questioning Young's policies)**
    - **Spiritualism (communication with dead—heterodox)**

The Conflict:

***October 1868*: Godbe group published essays criticizing church economic policies in Utah Magazine**

***Church Response*:**

- **Summoned to church court**
- **Charged with apostasy, sustaining criticism of leadership**
- **October 1869: Godbe, Kelsey, and others excommunicated (several dozen total)**

The Aftermath:

***New Movement formed*:**

- **Liberal Mormon faction**
- **Church of Zion (1870)**
- **Advocated reforms**
- **Published Salt Lake Tribune (anti-Mormon newspaper)**

***Economic Consequences*:**

- **Godbe's businesses boycotted by Mormons**
- **ZCMI shares confiscated**
- **Economic isolation**
- **Eventually left Utah or marginalized**

The Strategic Function:

Godbeite excommunication sent message:

- **Economic disagreement = apostasy**
- **Questioning leadership = expulsion**
- **Alternative viewpoints wouldn't be tolerated**
- **Price of dissent: Economic ruin, social death**

Other Examples of Economic Discipline:

***Walker War* (1853-1854):**

- **Utah War with Ute Indians**
- **Some Mormons traded with Utes (contrary to Young's boycott)**
- **Traders excommunicated, property confiscated**
- **Demonstrated economic policies enforced through religious authority**

***Non-Compliant Businesses*:**

- **Merchants who didn't join cooperatives faced boycotts**
- **Individuals shopping at gentile stores reported to bishops**
- **Economic faithfulness = religious faithfulness**

The Federal Anti-Polygamy Campaign: Legal Suppression (1862-1890)

Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act (1862):

First federal anti-polygamy law:

- **Prohibited bigamy in territories**
- **Dissolved Mormon corporation (church property limits)**
- **Not enforced during Civil War (federal government distracted)**

Poland Act (1874):

Strengthened enforcement:

- **Reformed Utah court system (reducing Mormon control)**
- **Federal judges and prosecutors (replacing Mormon judges)**
- **Conviction became possible**

Reynolds v. United States (1879):

Supreme Court case:

- **George Reynolds (Brigham Young's secretary) test case**
- **Argued: First Amendment protected polygamy (religious freedom)**
- **Court ruled: Religious belief protected, religious practice (polygamy) not protected**
- **Established precedent: Government can ban practices even if religious**

Edmunds Act (1882):

Major escalation:

- **Made polygamy felony (5 years prison, $500 fine)**
- **Created "unlawful cohabitation" crime (easier to prove than polygamy)**
- **Disenfranchised polygamists (couldn't vote, hold office)**

- **Established Utah Commission (federal oversight of elections)**

Impact:

- **Hundreds imprisoned (including apostles, bishops)**
- **Leaders went into hiding ("on the underground")**
- **Families separated (wives/children in hiding)**
- **Political power reduced (polygamists couldn't vote or serve)**

Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887):

Most severe:

- **Dissolved church corporation**
- **Seized church property over $50,000**
- **Disenfranchised all Mormon women (previously voted in Utah)**
- **Required loyalty oath renouncing polygamy**
- **Abolished Nauvoo Legion**
- **Prohibited church from controlling schools**
- **Bastardized children (declared polygamous marriages void, children illegitimate)**

The Federal Strategy:

***Goal*: Force Mormons to choose between polygamy and statehood**

***Methods*:**

- **Economic pressure (property seizure)**
- **Legal pressure (imprisonment)**
- **Political pressure (disenfranchisement)**
- **Social pressure (illegitimizing families)**

Mormon Resistance (1882-1890):

***The Underground*:**

- **Polygamist leaders hiding**
- **Aliases, safe houses**
- **Continuing plural marriages in secret**
- **Colonies in Mexico, Canada for polygamists**

***Rhetoric*:**

- **Polygamy = eternal principle, cannot surrender**
- **Federal government = persecution like ancient Rome**
- **Will fight to death for religious freedom**

***Reality*:**

- **Finances collapsing (property seizures)**
- **Leadership exhausted (years in hiding)**
- **Political isolation (statehood repeatedly denied)**
- **Recognition: Cannot win**

The Accommodation:

***October 6, 1890*: Wilford Woodruff (church president) issued Manifesto:**

> **"I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws [prohibiting polygamy], and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise... I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."**

Aftermath:

- **New polygamous marriages officially ceased (though continued secretly until 1904)**
- **Federal pressure reduced**
- **Property gradually returned**
- **Utah statehood granted 1896**
- **Church survived by surrendering its most distinctive practice**

[End of Part 2]

The Latter-Day Saints: Alternative Elite Formation and Strategic Accommodation in 19th Century America (1830-1896) - Part 3 of 3

Section VII: Elite Network Coordination - The Accommodation Strategy

Joseph Smith Era (1830-1844): Charismatic Dictatorship and the Succession Crisis

Building Personal Authority: From Prophet to King

Joseph Smith's authority evolved dramatically from humble prophet to quasi-monarchical ruler:

Early Period (1830-1835): Prophetic Authority

- **Founded church claiming divine revelation**
- **Authority derived from Book of Mormon, ongoing revelations**
- **Shared power with others (Oliver Cowdery as scribe, Sidney Rigdon as spokesman)**
- **Democratic elements (sustaining votes, conferences)**

Middle Period (1835-1842): Institutional Consolidation

- **Created First Presidency (Smith + 2 counselors)**
- **Established Quorum of Twelve Apostles**
- **Instituted priesthood hierarchy**
- **Concentrated financial control (trustee-in-trust of all church property)**
- **Kirtland Safety Society failure (1837) caused defections but Smith survived**

Final Period (1842-1844): Theocratic Monarchy

***Religious Authority*:**

- **Prophet, seer, revelator (exclusive divine communication)**
- **Introduced temple endowment (secret ceremonies bonding elite)**
- **Polygamy commander (married 30-40 women, authorized elite polygamy)**
- **Could excommunicate anyone (including apostles)**

***Political Authority*:**

- **Mayor of Nauvoo (executive power)**
- **President of city council (legislative power)**
- **Chief justice of municipal court (judicial power)**
- **Presidential candidate (1844 US presidency)**

***Military Authority*:**

- **Lieutenant General of Nauvoo Legion (highest military rank in America)**
- **Commanded 2,000-5,000 armed men**
- **Could mobilize Legion for political purposes**

***Economic Authority*:**

- **Trustee-in-trust of all church property**
- **Controlled tithing revenues**
- **Directed economic development**
- **Personal business empire (stores, mills, real estate)**

The Council of Fifty (March 1844): Coronation as King

The secret council ordained Smith:

> **"King, Priest, and Ruler over Israel on Earth"**

This was explicit monarchical claim:

- **Not merely religious leader**
- **Not merely temporal leader**
- **Combined religious and political sovereignty**
- **Prepared for Kingdom of God (theocratic monarchy replacing United States)**

The Inner Circle:

Smith's closest associates:

- **Sidney Rigdon: First Counselor, intellectual, orator**
- **Hyrum Smith: Joseph's brother, Patriarch, Second Counselor (after Rigdon lost favor)**
- **Brigham Young: President of Quorum of Twelve, pragmatic organizer**
- **Heber C. Kimball: Apostle, Young's closest ally**
- **Willard Richards: Apostle, historian, advisor**
- **John Taylor: Apostle, editor, defender**

Each had distinct role; none challenged Smith's ultimate authority (those who did were expelled—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, others).

The Succession Crisis (1844): Multiple Claimants and Brigham Young's Victory

Joseph and Hyrum Smith's assassination (June 27, 1844) created leadership vacuum:

No Clear Succession Mechanism:

Smith never formally designated successor. Multiple plausible claims:

1. Sidney Rigdon (First Counselor):

- ***Claim*: Senior surviving member of First Presidency**
- ***Strategy*: Rushed to Nauvoo from Pennsylvania, called meeting August 1844**
- ***Proposed*: Guardian/trustee system (not successor but protector)**
- ***Weakness*: Had been out of favor, not charismatic, seen as opportunistic**

2. Brigham Young (President of Twelve Apostles):

- ***Claim*: Quorum of Twelve had authority when First Presidency dissolved**
- ***Strategy*: Delayed, arrived after Rigdon's push, called counter-meeting**
- ***Proposed*: Twelve would lead collectively (Young as president of Twelve)**
- ***Strengths*: Organizational ability, support of apostles, pragmatic leadership**

3. James Strang:

- ***Claim*: Letter from Joseph Smith designating him successor (probably forged)**
- ***Location*: Wisconsin, established Strangite movement**
- ***Following*: Several thousand adherents**
- ***Fate*: Established colony on Beaver Island, Michigan; assassinated 1856**

4. Joseph Smith III (Joseph's eldest son):

- ***Claim*: Hereditary succession (son of prophet)**
- ***Age problem*: Only 11 years old in 1844**
- ***Later*: Became president of Reorganized Church (RLDS, now Community of Christ) 1860**
- ***Following*: Emma Smith and many Midwestern Mormons**

5. Lyman Wight:

- ***Claim*: Member of Council of Fifty, Smith's special mission to Texas**
- ***Following*: Small group in Texas**
- ***Fate*: Died 1858, movement dissolved**

The August 8, 1844 Meeting: The Transfiguration:

Critical moment in Mormon history:

***Morning Session*:**

- **Sidney Rigdon spoke for 90 minutes**
- **Argued for guardian system**
- **Audience lukewarm**

***Afternoon Session*:**

- **Brigham Young spoke**
- **Multiple witnesses later claimed: Young's voice and appearance transformed to resemble Joseph Smith**
- **"Transfiguration of Brigham Young"—supernatural sign of legitimation**
- **Audience voted overwhelmingly for Twelve's leadership**

Historical Analysis:

***Mormon interpretation*: Divine manifestation proving Young's authority**

***Critical interpretation*:**

- **Young was skilled orator who mimicked Smith's gestures and tone**
- **Crowd suggestion and expectation created perceptual phenomenon**
- **Retrospective accounts exaggerated (earliest accounts don't mention transfiguration)**
- **Political theater: Young staged dramatic event to claim authority**

***What matters*: The audience believed it; Young won succession dispute.**

Consolidating Power (1844-1847):

Young systematically eliminated rivals:

***Sidney Rigdon*:**

- **October 1844: Excommunicated for opposing Twelve's authority**
- **Formed Church of Christ (Rigdonite), few followers**
- **Died in obscurity 1876**

***Strangites*:**

- **Several apostles defected to Strang (John E. Page, William Smith—Joseph's brother)**
- **Young excommunicated defectors**
- **Strangite movement eventually collapsed after Strang's assassination**

***Emma Smith and Smith family*:**

- **Emma refused to follow Young west**
- **Remained in Nauvoo with children**
- **Joseph Smith III eventually led RLDS Church (rejected polygamy, Young's authority)**
- **Permanent schism between Utah Mormons and Midwestern RLDS**

By 1847: Young had consolidated control, led Mormon exodus to Utah, established himself as second prophet-president.

Brigham Young Era (1847-1877): Theocracy and Pragmatic Dictatorship

Establishing Utah Theocracy (1847-1858)

The Migration (1846-1847):

Young organized exodus with military precision:

- **15,000+ Mormons left Illinois 1846-1847**
- **Pioneer company (143 men, 3 women, 2 children) arrived July 24, 1847**
- **"This is the place" moment (Young viewing Salt Lake Valley)**
- **Systematic colonization: Surveyed city, assigned plots, organized irrigation**

Theocratic Governance Structure:

Young merged religious and civil authority completely:

***Religious Authority*:**

- **President of Church (1847, after reorganizing First Presidency)**
- **Prophet, seer, revelator (sole divine spokesman)**
- **Temple authority (administered endowments, sealed marriages)**

***Civil Authority*:**

- **President of State of Deseret (1849-1850, provisional government)**
- **Governor of Utah Territory (1850-1858, federal appointment)**
- **Superintendent of Indian Affairs (federal position, used to control indigenous peoples)**

***Legislative Authority*:**

- **Controlled territorial legislature (Mormon majority, voted as directed)**
- **City government (Salt Lake, other Mormon towns)**

***Judicial Authority*:**

- **Appointed judges**

- **Influenced ecclesiastical courts handling civil matters**
- **Probate courts (used extensively, controlled by Mormons)**

The One-Man Rule:

Young's authority was absolute:

- **Economic: Directed settlement, assigned land, controlled cooperative stores**
- **Social: Arranged marriages (especially plural marriages), disciplined members**
- **Military: Controlled militia, directed Utah War resistance**
- **Ideological: Sermons were law (Adam-God theory, blood atonement, race doctrine)**

Dissent Was Impossible:

***Criticism of Young = apostasy*:**

- **Gladden Bishop: Challenged Young's authority (1844), expelled, persecuted**
- **William Godbe: Questioned economic policies (1869), excommunicated**
- **Numerous others: Disappeared (suspicious deaths attributed to Danites, evidence circumstantial)**

The Reformation (1856-1857):

Young initiated religious revival/purge:

- **Rebaptism required (recommitment to church)**
- **Public confessions of sins**
- **Blood atonement sermons (heightened fear)**
- **Increased discipline and surveillance**
- **Contextualized Utah War and Mountain Meadows Massacre (febrile, paranoid atmosphere)**

Personality:

Young was pragmatic authoritarian:

- **Not mystical like Joseph Smith (fewer visions, less charismatic)**
- **Organizational genius (settlement planning, resource management)**
- **Ruthless when necessary (eliminating rivals, suppressing dissent)**
- **Commercially minded (built business empire while preaching consecration)**
- **Family man (55+ wives, 57 children—vast dynastic household)**

Managing the Apostolic Oligarchy: The Quorum of Twelve

The Twelve as Corporate Board:

After Young consolidated power, Twelve functioned as:

- **Advisory council (counseled Young on policies)**
- **Regional administrators (assigned to supervise stakes, settlements)**
- **Business directors (sat on boards of church enterprises)**
- **Doctrinal authorities (taught and enforced orthodox beliefs)**

Key Figures (1847-1877):

***Heber C. Kimball* (First Counselor 1847-1868):**

- **Young's closest ally from Nauvoo period**
- **Managed internal church affairs**
- **43 wives, wealthy, loyal**

***Willard Richards* (Second Counselor 1847-1854):**

- **Church historian, record-keeper**
- **Managed correspondence and documentation**
- **Died 1854**

***Daniel H. Wells* (Second Counselor 1857-1877):**

- **Military leader (commanded militia during Utah War)**
- **Civil administrator (mayor of Salt Lake)**
- **Enforcer (directed coercive measures when necessary)**

***Orson Pratt* (Apostle):**

- **Intellectual, mathematician, writer**
- **Occasionally dissented (Adam-God theory, other doctrines)**
- **Young publicly rebuked him but tolerated (useful for intellectual credibility)**

***John Taylor* (Apostle, later 3rd President):**

- **Editor of church newspapers**
- **Defender of polygamy (wrote extensive apologetics)**
- **With Joseph Smith at death (wounded in Carthage)**
- **Succeeded Young as president (1880)**

Internal Tensions:

Even within Twelve, conflicts existed:

***Orson Pratt vs. Brigham Young*:**

- **Theological disagreements (Pratt rejected some Young doctrines)**

- **Young threatened Pratt with excommunication (1860)**
- **Pratt recanted, retained apostleship**
- **Demonstrated: Even apostles must submit to president's authority**

***Amasa Lyman* (Apostle):**

- **Questioned atonement doctrine**
- **Excommunicated 1867 despite apostolic status**
- **Message: No rank protects dissent**

***The Unwritten Rule*:**

Apostles could debate privately but must present united front publicly. Sustaining leadership was mandatory. Personal opinions subordinated to institutional solidarity.

Succession After Young (1877): John Taylor and Continued Theocracy

Young's Death (August 29, 1877):

Unlike Joseph Smith (assassinated), Young died of natural causes at 76:

- **Left massive estate ($600,000-$2,000,000)**
- **16 wives surviving (39 deceased)**
- **57 children**
- **Complex probate (took years to settle)**

The Succession:

This time, clear mechanism:

- **President of Quorum of Twelve succeeded (Brigham Young's precedent)**
- **John Taylor (senior apostle) became president (1880, after 3-year transition)**

John Taylor's Presidency (1880-1887):

***Different Style*:**

- **More rigid than Young (less pragmatic)**
- **Absolute on polygamy (refused compromise)**
- **Intellectual (published defenses of Mormon doctrine)**

***Federal Pressure Intensifies*:**

Under Taylor:

- **Edmunds Act (1882): Mass imprisonments of polygamists**
- **Edmunds-Tucker Act (1887): Church corporation dissolved, property seized**

- **Taylor went into hiding (1885, "on the underground")**
- **Died in hiding (July 25, 1887)—martyr for polygamy**

The Crisis Deepens:

By Taylor's death:

- **Hundreds of polygamists imprisoned**
- **Church property seized**
- **Political power eliminated (polygamists disenfranchised)**
- **Statehood repeatedly denied**
- **Financial collapse looming (tithing revenues declined, property liquidated)**

Leadership Dilemma:

Could church survive federal assault? Two options:

- **Fight to extinction (Taylor's approach)**
- **Accommodate (surrender polygamy, preserve church)**

The Accommodation Strategy (1887-1896): Wilford Woodruff and Strategic Surrender

Wilford Woodruff's Succession (1887-1898)

Background:

Wilford Woodruff (born 1807) was:

- **Fourth President of Church (1889, after 2-year First Presidency vacancy)**
- **Oldest living apostle (would die at 91 in 1898)**
- **Pragmatist (less ideological than Taylor)**
- **Historian (kept detailed journals documenting church history)**
- **Willing to compromise for survival**

The Situation (1887-1890):

***Federal Pressure*:**

- **Idaho Test Oath (1885): Disenfranchised all Mormons, not just polygamists**
- **Edmunds-Tucker seized $800,000+ in church property**
- **Supreme Court upheld seizures (1890)**
- **Congress considering even harsher laws**
- **Statehood impossible while practicing polygamy**

***Internal Pressure*:**

- **Members suffering (families separated, leaders imprisoned)**
- **Financial crisis (tithing revenues collapsed)**
- **Young generation questioned polygamy (economic burden, social stigma)**
- **Pragmatic faction (including Woodruff) recognized: Fight is unwinnable**

***Ideological Conflict*:**

- **Hardliners: Polygamy is eternal principle, cannot surrender**
- **Pragmatists: Church survival more important than any single doctrine**
- **Theological problem: How to reverse doctrine claimed as divine revelation?**

The Manifesto (October 6, 1890): The Strategic Surrender

The Document:

Woodruff issued official declaration:

> **"Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise...**
>
> **And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."**

What It Said:

- **Church would obey anti-polygamy laws**
- **No new plural marriages**
- **Advised members to comply**
- **Claimed this was consistent with church doctrine (Article of Faith 12: obeying law of land)**

What It Didn't Say:

- **Existing plural marriages not dissolved**
- **No admission polygamy was wrong**
- **No claim this was revelation (initially)**
- **Underground polygamy could continue (wink-wink)**

The Theological Sleight of Hand:

Problem: How to abandon doctrine revealed by God?

Solution:

- **Present as pragmatic submission to law, not doctrinal change**
- **Claim: God revealed polygamy for specific time; God now revealed it should cease (revelation, not reversal)**
- **Later narrative (developed over years): Manifesto itself was revelation (Woodruff received vision)**

The Vote (October 6, 1890 General Conference):

Members "sustained" Manifesto:

- **Not presented as vote (would imply members could reject revelation)**
- **Presented as support for prophet's decision**
- **Unanimous (dissent was impossible socially)**

Immediate Reactions:

***Mormon responses*:**

- **Relief (persecution would end)**
- **Confusion (eternal principle abandoned?)**
- **Anger (hardliners felt betrayed)**
- **Pragmatic acceptance (most members complied)**

***Federal responses*:**

- **Skepticism (will Mormons actually stop polygamy?)**
- **Cautious acceptance (pressure reduced, monitoring continued)**
- **Requirement: Prove compliance before statehood**

The Transition (1890-1896): From Theocracy to Integrated Territory

Demonstrating Compliance:

Woodruff and successors needed to prove:

- **New plural marriages ceased**
- **Political loyalty to United States**
- **Acceptance of federal sovereignty**

The Actions:

***Polygamy Enforcement*:**

- **1890-1904: New plural marriages continued secretly (in Mexico, Canada, at sea)**
- **1904: Second Manifesto (Joseph F. Smith) absolutely forbade new marriages**
- **Violators excommunicated (finally enforced)**
- **By 1910: New polygamy essentially ceased**

***Political Restructuring*:**

- **Two-party system implemented (Mormon Democrats and Republicans)**
- **Previously: Mormons voted as bloc (directed by leadership)**
- **Now: Appearance of political diversity (reality: church still controlled both parties)**
- **Federal officials satisfied: Democratic forms observed**

***People's Party Dissolved* (1891):**

- **Mormon political party disbanded**
- **Members joined Democrats or Republicans**
- **Reduced appearance of Mormon voting bloc**

***Church-State Separation* (appearance):**

- **Woodruff resigned as territorial governor (had been symbolic position anyway)**
- **Church claimed it didn't direct politics**
- **Reality: Leaders still influenced through sermons, private counsel**

***Economic Accommodation*:**

- **Church businesses made less exclusive**
- **Gentile merchants allowed to compete**
- **ZCMI became more conventional retailer (less monopolistic)**
- **Appearance of free market economy**

***Property Return*:**

- **Federal government gradually returned seized property (1890s)**
- **Church rebuilt financial base**
- **By 1900: Wealthier than ever**

Utah Statehood (January 4, 1896):

After demonstrating compliance:

- **Congress passed Utah Enabling Act (1894)**
- **Constitutional convention (1895): State constitution drafted**
- **Prohibited polygamy in state constitution (requirement for admission)**
- **January 4, 1896: Utah became 45th state**
- **Mormon goal achieved: Self-governance restored (within federal system)**

Why the Accommodation Worked: Strategic Factors

1. Leadership Pragmatism:

Unlike earlier leaders:

- **Woodruff prioritized survival over doctrinal purity**
- **Younger apostles (Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith) supported accommodation**
- **Hardliners (like Moses Thatcher) were marginalized or expelled**

2. Changing Membership:

Second and third-generation Mormons:

- **Born in Utah, not converts who sacrificed for gathering**
- **Less fervent, more pragmatic**
- **Wanted normalcy (statehood, acceptance, economic opportunity)**
- **Polygamy was burden (most men couldn't afford multiple wives anyway)**

3. Economic Calculation:

Statehood meant:

- **Access to federal resources (military protection, infrastructure investment)**
- **Legal security for property**
- **Economic development opportunities**
- **Railroad connections bringing prosperity**

Fighting meant:

- **Ongoing property seizures**
- **Economic isolation**
- **Continued persecution**
- **Possible extinction**

4. Ideological Flexibility:

Mormon theology's strength = weakness:

- **Continuing revelation allowed doctrinal changes**
- **Prophet could reverse previous prophets**
- **What God commanded yesterday, He could revoke today**
- **This flexibility enabled survival but also revealed instrumentalism**

5. Federal Cost-Benefit:

By 1890s, federal government preferred accommodation:

- **Expensive to continue suppression (military, courts, administration)**
- **Utah cooperation valuable (mining, railroad, western settlement)**
- **Manifest Destiny required integrating western territories**
- **Mormon compliance was achievable, cheaper than destruction**

6. Geographic Reality:

Utah isolation was ending:

- **Transcontinental railroad (1869) connected Utah**
- **Telegraph (1861) enabled instant federal communication**
- **Mining booms brought gentile population**
- **Isolation strategy was obsolete; integration was inevitable**

7. Comparative Examples:

Mormons learned from others' failures:

- **Jesuits: Destroyed by refusing accommodation (papal loyalty vs. national sovereignty)**
- **Nizaris: Destroyed by fighting to extinction (Mongol conquest)**
- **Other utopian communities: Faded or destroyed**

Mormon pragmatism: Survive by becoming complementary rather than competitive.

The Internal Conflicts: Managing the Transition

Hardliner Resistance:

Some leaders refused accommodation:

***Moses Thatcher* (Apostle):**

- **Publicly criticized Manifesto**
- **Continued advocating polygamy**
- **Ran for political office without church permission**
- **1896: Removed from Quorum of Twelve (effectively demoted)**
- **Message: Even apostles must obey**

***B.H. Roberts* (General Authority):**

- **Elected to Congress (1898)**
- **Revealed he had three wives (post-Manifesto)**
- **Congress refused to seat him**
- **Church embarrassed, quietly punished Roberts**

***Fundamentalist Splinters*:**

- **Some members rejected Manifesto, continued polygamy**
- **Eventually formed separate fundamentalist groups (FLDS, others)**
- **Church excommunicated polygamist fundamentalists**
- **Ongoing tension between mainstream LDS and fundamentalists**

Doctrinal Management:

Church needed to explain reversal:

***Official Narrative* (developed over decades):**

- **Manifesto was revelation (eventually claimed)**
- **God sometimes commands, sometimes revokes (Abraham and Isaac precedent)**
- **Polygamy was for specific time, purpose fulfilled**
- **Church preserved by divine wisdom (Woodruff's inspiration saved church)**

***Suppressed Narrative*:**

- **Manifesto was political necessity**
- **Church chose survival over principle**
- **Pragmatism trumped theology**
- **Revelation was post-hoc justification**

The Generational Shift:

Leadership transitioned from pioneers to Utah-born:

***Pioneer Generation* (1847 arrivals):**

- **Remembered persecution, sacrifices**
- **Ideologically committed to polygamy, theocracy**
- **Died off by 1900-1910**

***Utah Generation* (born 1850s-1870s):**

- **Grew up in isolated Utah, not persecuted states**
- **More pragmatic, less ideological**
- **Wanted American normalcy**
- **Supported accommodation**

***Early 20th Century Leadership*:**

- **Joseph F. Smith (nephew of Joseph Smith, president 1901-1918): Consolidator, ended polygamy completely**
- **Heber J. Grant (president 1918-1945): Businessman, modernizer**
- **Focus shifted from peculiarity to assimilation**

The Post-Statehood Accommodation (1896-1920s): Becoming American

Political Integration:

Mormons demonstrated loyalty:

- **Spanish-American War (1898): Mormons volunteered enthusiastically**
- **World War I (1917-1918): High enlistment rates, bought war bonds**
- **Dropped separatist rhetoric, emphasized patriotism**
- **Senators, congressmen elected from Utah (Mormons, mostly)**

Economic Integration:

Church businesses became conventional:

- **ZCMI competed normally (no more boycotts)**
- **Church invested in mainstream industries (sugar, insurance, media)**
- **Elite Mormons became capitalists (indistinguishable from other Western elites)**
- **Wealth accumulation celebrated (prosperity gospel emerged)**

Social Integration:

Mormon distinctiveness decreased:

- **Polygamy ceased (publicly)**
- **Temple garments hidden under normal clothes**
- **Dietary code (Word of Wisdom) selectively enforced**
- **Education: Mormons attended non-Mormon universities**
- **Marriages: Some interfaith marriages tolerated**

But Core Elements Preserved:

***Tithing*:**

- **10% remained mandatory**
- **Temple recommend required payment**
- **Revenue grew massively as members became wealthier**

***Temples*:**

- **Secret ceremonies continued**
- **Sacred vs. secret rhetoric**
- **Endowment created ongoing commitment**

***Missionary System*:**

- **Young men (and women) served missions**
- **Created international networks**
- **Proselytizing continued (though faced resistance)**

***Priesthood Hierarchy*:**

- **All-male governance preserved**

- **Lay ministry (no professional clergy) maintained**
- **Bishops surveilled wards**

***Prophetic Authority*:**

- **Living prophet continued revelations (occasionally)**
- **Leadership decisions were final**
- **Questioning leaders = apostasy**

The Formula:

Surrender what federal government demanded (polygamy, theocracy, political separatism)

Preserve what federal government didn't care about (internal church authority, tithing, temples, missionary system, surveillance)

Result: Church survived, thrived, became integrated elite while maintaining distinct identity and institutional power.

Section VIII: Long-Term Consequences - The Modern Mormon Empire

Transformation to Integrated Elite (1896-Present)

The Corporate Church: Building a Business Empire

Financial Secrecy (since 1959):

Church stopped disclosing finances:

- **Last public accounting: 1959**
- **Reason: Avoid controversy over wealth while preaching sacrifice**
- **Members pay tithing without knowing how it's spent**
- **Estimates come from leaks, investigative journalism, occasional disclosures**

Estimated Assets (2020s):

***Conservative Estimates*:**

- **$100-150 billion total assets**
- **$40-50 billion liquid investments (Ensign Peak Advisors scandal 2019 revealed $100+ billion fund)**

- **$30-50 billion real estate**
- **$10-20 billion agricultural land**
- **$10+ billion in businesses**

***Key Holdings*:**

Ensign Peak Advisors:

- **Investment fund managing tithing surplus**
- **2019: Whistleblower revealed $100+ billion**
- **SEC fined church $5 million (2023) for hiding fund through shell companies**
- **Questions about charitable tax exemption (hoarding, not spending on charity)**

Deseret Management Corporation:

- **Holding company for for-profit businesses**
- **Media: Deseret News, Deseret Book, KSL radio/TV**
- **Insurance: Beneficial Life**
- **Real estate: City Creek Mall ($1.5 billion, Salt Lake City), extensive holdings**
- **Agriculture: 1+ million acres farmland, ranches, orchards**

AgReserves:

- **Agricultural holdings (largest private landowner in Florida—670,000 acres)**
- **Hunting reserves, timber, ranches**
- **Revenue-generating, not just charitable**

Property Holdings:

- **Temples (170+ worldwide, expensive buildings)**
- **Meetinghouses (30,000+ globally)**
- **Universities (BYU Provo, Idaho, Hawaii—40,000+ students)**
- **Welfare facilities (distribution centers, farms)**

The Business Model:

***Income*:**

- **Tithing: Estimated $7-10 billion annually (16-17 million members, though activity rates disputed; wealthy American/European members pay bulk)**
- **Investment returns: Billions annually (Ensign Peak generated massive returns)**
- **Business revenues: Deseret Management companies profitable**

***Expenses*:**

- **Construction: Temples, meetinghouses (expensive but tax-exempt)**
- **Welfare: Bishops' storehouses, humanitarian aid (modest compared to revenue)**

- **Education: BYU system (but students pay tuition, though subsidized)**
- **Administration: No paid clergy (bishops, stake presidents volunteer); General Authorities receive stipends (estimated $120,000+)**

***Surplus*:**

- **Accumulated in investment funds**
- **Not redistributed to members**
- **Not spent on charity proportionately**
- **Hoarded for institutional security and growth**

The Pattern:

Church functions as corporation disguised as charity:

- **Tax-exempt status (religious organization)**
- **Massive revenue (mandatory tithing)**
- **Minimal redistribution (welfare spending small percentage)**
- **Profit-generating businesses (competing with taxed businesses unfairly)**
- **Wealth accumulation (Ensign Peak scandal revealed extent)**

Political Integration and Influence

Disproportionate Representation:

Mormons are 2% of US population but overrepresented in:

***US Congress*:**

- **Currently: 9 senators, 6 representatives (as of 2020s)**
- **Mormons: 2% population, 5-6% Congress**
- **Both parties (though more Republicans)**

***Federal Agencies*:**

- **FBI: Disproportionate Mormon representation (trustworthy, don't drink, conservative)**
- **CIA: Similar pattern (language skills from missions valuable)**
- **Other agencies: Treasury, Defense, State Department**

***State/Local Politics*:**

- **Utah: 90% legislature is Mormon (dominant)**
- **Idaho, Arizona, Nevada: Significant representation**
- **Other states: Mormon politicians rising (Mitt Romney, Harry Reid examples)**

The Mormon Political Network:

***Conservative Dominance*:**

- **Church officially non-partisan**
- **Reality: Leans Republican (70%+ of Mormons vote Republican)**
- **Social conservatism (abortion, LGBTQ rights, traditional family)**
- **Economic conservatism (free enterprise, limited government)**
- **National security hawks (support military, intelligence agencies)**

***Occasional Democrats*:**

- **Harry Reid (Senate Majority Leader 2007-2015, Democrat)**
- **Demonstrates church doesn't control all members politically**
- **But Reid was exception; most Mormon politicians are Republican**

***Political Issues*:**

Church mobilizes on specific issues:

- **Proposition 8 (California 2008): Church heavily funded anti-gay marriage campaign**
- **Equal Rights Amendment (1970s-1980s): Church opposed**
- **Abortion: Strongly opposed**
- **Immigration: More moderate (humanitarian concerns)**

The Mobilization Mechanism:

Church doesn't officially endorse candidates but:

- **Leaders' sermons signal positions**
- **Bishops can encourage voting patterns**
- **Church welfare system creates dependency (economic incentive to comply)**
- **Social pressure in Mormon-dominant areas**
- **Result: Block voting in Mormon-heavy areas**

Educational and Social Influence

Brigham Young University System:

***BYU Provo* (Utah):**

- **33,000+ students**
- **Highly selective (acceptance rate ~50%, mostly Mormon applicants)**
- **Strict Honor Code (no alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, premarital sex; church attendance required)**
- **Subsidized tuition ($6,000 vs. $30,000+ comparable private universities)**
- **Academic quality: Strong programs (business, law, engineering)**

***BYU Idaho, BYU Hawaii*:**

- **Smaller campuses (10,000, 3,000 students)**
- **Similar model: Cheap tuition, strict rules, Mormon dominance**

The Educational Function:

***Elite Reproduction*:**

- **Mormon families send children to BYU (affordable, safe, Mormon culture)**
- **Students marry other Mormons (endogamy)**
- **Network effects: BYU alumni support each other in careers**
- **Ideological reinforcement: Faculty are Mormon; curriculum includes religion classes**

***Credential Production*:**

- **BYU degree signals: Hard-working, clean-living, conservative, Mormon**
- **Employers (especially Mormon employers) prefer BYU grads**
- **MBA, law degrees valuable (Stone-Hagey debate championship success, law school reputation)**

Seminary and Institute System:

***Released-time seminary*:**

- **High school students attend religion classes daily**
- **Held near public schools (Utah) or early morning (elsewhere)**
- **400,000+ participants**

***Institute*:**

- **College-age young adults attend religion classes**
- **Held near university campuses**
- **350,000+ participants**

***Function*:**

- **Indoctrination continuing through education**
- **Social networks (meet other young Mormons)**
- **Marriage market (find Mormon spouse)**
- **Retention (keeps young adults engaged during high-apostasy years)**

The Missionary System: Global Expansion and Network Creation

The Modern Mission:

***Scale*:**

- **70,000+ missionaries serving currently (2020s)**
- **18-month missions (women), 2-year missions (men)**
- **400+ missions worldwide**

***Cost*:**

- **Missionaries (or families) pay $500/month (~$12,000 total)**
- **Church provides structure (housing, supervision)**
- **Effectively: Families fund church's expansion**

***Process*:**

- **Age 18-25 (lowered from 19 for men in 2012)**
- **Apply, receive "call" to specific mission (prophet assigns—actually, bureaucratic algorithm)**
- **Missionary Training Center: 3-12 weeks (language, proselytizing skills)**
- **Serve in assigned location (rules: no phone except weekly family call, constant companionship, strict schedule)**

Conversion Results:

***Mixed success*:**

- **Total conversions: 200,000-300,000 annually (church claims)**
- **Retention: Low (estimates 25-50% remain active after 5 years)**
- **Geographic variation: Latin America high baptism rates but low retention; Asia difficult; Africa growing**
- **Wealthy countries: Minimal success (Europe, North America conversions declining)**

The Real Function:

Missions aren't primarily about converts—they're about converting the missionaries:

***Commitment Mechanism*:**

- **2 years sacrificed (opportunity cost: college, career, relationships)**
- **Sunk cost fallacy: After investing 2 years, leaving church means waste**
- **Identity: "Returned missionary" status, stories told lifelong**
- **Marriage market: Women prefer returned missionaries (social pressure to serve)**

***Skill Development*:**

- **Sales skills (door-knocking, cold-calling, overcoming objections)**
- **Language skills (valuable in business, intelligence work)**

- **Discipline (rigid schedule, obedience to rules)**
- **Networking (create lifelong bonds with missionary companions)**

***Result*:**

- **Young adults deeply committed before entering careers**
- **Married young (to Mormon spouses, during/after missions)**
- **Established in Mormon social networks**
- **Unlikely to leave (too much invested)**

The Persistence of Alternative Elements Within Complementary Framework

What Was Surrendered (to gain acceptance):

- **Polygamy (publicly)**
- **Theocracy (formally)**
- **Voting bloc (appearance)**
- **Economic separatism**
- **Political independence**

What Was Preserved (internal authority):

- **Tithing extraction (mandatory 10%)**
- **Temple secrecy (endowment continues)**
- **Prophetic authority (living prophet's words are scripture)**
- **Ecclesiastical courts (internal justice)**
- **Surveillance system (bishops, home teachers)**
- **All-male priesthood (women excluded from governance)**
- **Missionary system (70,000 unpaid workers)**
- **Educational control (BYU, seminary, institute)**

The Modern Accommodation:

Church presents two faces:

***External*:**

- **Wholesome, patriotic, family-focused**
- **Christian (despite theological differences)**
- **Charitable (humanitarian aid, disaster relief)**
- **Cooperative (with government, other churches)**

***Internal*:**

- **Demanding (tithing, missions, temple service)**
- **Authoritarian (questioning leaders = apostasy)**

- **Separatist (marry within faith, socialize with members)**
- **Exclusive (temple ordinances required for highest heaven)**

The Success:

Church is simultaneously:

- **Integrated (Mormons in Congress, business, military)**
- **Distinct (maintaining separate identity, practices, beliefs)**
- **Wealthy (estimated $100-150 billion assets)**
- **Growing (16-17 million members, though growth slowing)**

This is what successful accommodation looks like: Complementary rather than competitive institutions.

Comparative Implications: What the Mormon Case Teaches

Pattern 1: Alternative Institutions Provoke State Suppression

The Universal Pattern:

Whether Jesuits, Nizaris, or Mormons:

- **Building parallel sovereignty (legal, military, economic systems)**
- **Accumulating wealth and influence**
- **Creating loyal, mobilized populations**
- **Threatening existing elites**

State Response: Violent suppression

***Missouri* (1838): Extermination Order, forced exodus *Illinois* (1844): Joseph Smith assassination, Mormon expulsion *Federal Government* (1857-1890): Utah War, anti-polygamy campaign, property seizure**

The Threshold:

Small, marginal groups = tolerated Growing, organized groups = monitored Parallel sovereignty = suppressed

Mormons crossed threshold in Missouri (1838), Illinois (1844), and federally (1850s-1890s).

Modern Parallels:

- **Waco/Branch Davidians (1993): Armed religious community, federal raid, 76 dead**
- **Ruby Ridge (1992): Separatist family, standoff, deaths**

- **Cryptocurrency: Creating alternative currency → government regulation/suppression**
- **Charter cities: Attempting alternative governance → host states suspicious/resistant**

The Lesson: Alternative sovereignty is intolerable to consolidated states—even in democratic America.

Pattern 2: Strategic Accommodation Enables Survival

The Mormon Success:

Unlike Nizaris (destroyed) or Jesuits (suppressed):

- **Mormons negotiated survival**
- **Surrendered threatening elements (polygamy, theocracy)**
- **Preserved core authority (internal governance, tithing, temples)**
- **Transformed from competitive to complementary**

Why It Worked:

***Geographic isolation*: Bought time (1847-1890s) to build infrastructure before integration inevitable**

***Pragmatic leadership*: Wilford Woodruff chose survival over ideological purity**

***Ideological flexibility*: Continuing revelation doctrine allowed doctrinal reversal without admitting error**

***Federal cost-benefit*: Accommodation was cheaper than destruction for federal government**

***Timing*: 1890s US needed western integration; Mormon cooperation valuable**

The Strategic Logic:

Identify what threatens state power most:

- **Polygamy (moral outrage, federal focus)**
- **Theocracy (competing sovereignty)**
- **Voting bloc (political threat)**

Surrender those elements publicly while preserving:

- **Internal authority structures**
- **Wealth extraction mechanisms**
- **Educational and social networks**

- **Ideological coherence**

Modern Applications:

***Cryptocurrency*: If threatened with destruction, might accommodate (accept regulation, KYC requirements) to survive**

***Tech platforms*: Facebook, Google accommodating government demands (content moderation, data access) to avoid breakup**

***Charter cities*: Would need to accept host nation sovereignty, taxation to gain permission**

The Lesson: Institutions survive by becoming complementary to state power, not by fighting to extinction.

Pattern 3: Elite Reproduction Persists Across Regime Change

Pioneer Elite → Modern Elite:

***1847-1890*: Pioneer families (early arrivals) received:**

- **Best land**
- **Business opportunities**
- **Leadership positions**
- **Social prestige**

***1896-Present*: Same families:**

- **Descendants in church leadership (apostles disproportionately from pioneer elite families)**
- **Wealth inherited across generations**
- **Business empires (Marriott, Huntsman families—Mormon elite)**
- **Political influence (Romney family—George Romney, Mitt Romney)**

The Mechanisms:

***Inheritance*: Property passed to children *Endogamy*: Elite families intermarry *Educational advantage*: Sent children to universities *Network effects*: Family connections open doors *Religious validation*: Wealth = God's blessing**

The Persistence:

Despite regime change (theocracy → statehood → modern):

- **Same families wealthy**
- **Same patterns of privilege**
- **Same legitimation (now prosperity gospel instead of pioneer status)**

Comparison to Other Cases:

***Nizari Ismailis*: Elite survived underground, re-emerged as Aga Khan lineage (750+ years) *Jesuits*: After restoration (1814), resumed elite service role *US Colonial Elite*: Same families (descendants of colonial elites) remain wealthy**

The Lesson: Elite reproduction is extraordinarily durable. Regime changes don't eliminate elite families; they adapt.

Pattern 4: Geographic Strategy Is Temporary

Mountain Isolation Bought Time:

Utah distance from federal power (1,300 miles) enabled:

- **Building alternative institutions (1847-1869)**
- **Resisting federal pressure (1850s-1880s)**
- **Developing economic base**

But Isolation Ended:

***Transcontinental Railroad* (1869): Connected Utah to nation *Telegraph* (1861, connected Utah 1866): Instant federal communication *Mining booms* (1860s-1880s): Brought gentile population *Post-Civil War federal capacity*: Stronger state, better military, more bureaucracy**

By 1890: Isolation was obsolete; accommodation was inevitable.

Comparison:

***Nizari Fortresses*: Mountains protected until Mongol siege technology overcame advantage *Jesuit Global Network*: Geographic dispersion created resilience but also vulnerability when states coordinated *Mormon Utah*: Distance protected until transportation/communication technology closed gap**

The Lesson: Geographic strategy buys time, not permanent immunity. Eventually technology and state capacity overcome distance.

Pattern 5: Narrative Flexibility Enables Organizational Survival

Mormon Doctrinal Reversals:

***Polygamy*:**

- **1840s-1890: Eternal principle, required for highest heaven**
- **1890-present: Historical practice, no longer commanded**

***Theocracy*:**

- **1830s-1890s: Kingdom of God on earth, Christ to rule**
- **1896-present: Obey civil government, Church is spiritual not temporal**

***Race*:**

- **1849-1978: Black members denied priesthood (based on supposed curse)**
- **1978-present: "Revelation" extended priesthood to all races (civil rights pressure)**

***Women's Role*:**

- **1842-1844: Women had priesthood authority (Relief Society president blessed members)**
- **1845-present: Women excluded from priesthood**

The Mechanism:

***Continuing Revelation*:**

- **Prophet receives new revelation superseding old**
- **Presented as additional light, not reversal**
- **God's will changes based on circumstances (pragmatic flexibility disguised as divine guidance)**

The Function:

Ideological flexibility enables:

- **Adaptation to external pressure (surrender polygamy to survive)**
- **Accommodation to social change (racial equality, women's rights—partially)**
- **Maintaining core authority (prophet still controls doctrine)**

Comparison:

***Jesuits*: Ideological flexibility (accommodation in China vs. rigidity in Europe) but ultimately too rigid (wouldn't surrender papal loyalty) *Nizaris*: Qiyāma proclamation then reversal showed flexibility, but not enough to survive Mongols *US Constitution*: Amendments enable adaptation without revolution**

The Lesson: Organizations survive by adapting ideology to circumstances. Rigid ideology creates vulnerability; flexible ideology enables accommodation.

The Modern Mormon Position: Complementary Elite Institution

What Mormons Are Today:

***Integrated Elite*:**

- **In government (Congress, federal agencies)**
- **In business (Marriott, Huntsman, tech companies)**
- **In education (universities, though BYU is distinct)**
- **In military/intelligence (disproportionate representation)**

***Wealthy Institution*:**

- **$100-150 billion assets**
- **Profitable businesses**
- **Real estate empire**
- **Investment portfolio rivaling major corporations**

***Distinct Community*:**

- **Maintain separate identity (dietary code, temple rituals, endogamy)**
- **Strong internal cohesion (surveillance, tithing, mutual aid)**
- **High fertility (larger families than US average)**
- **Missionary system creating global presence**

The Functions Served:

***For American State*:**

- **Reliable conservative voters (predictable politically)**
- **Military and intelligence recruits (trustworthy, language skills)**
- **Stable, law-abiding citizens (low crime rates)**
- **Economic development (especially in Intermountain West)**

***For Mormon Elite*:**

- **Wealth extraction (tithing generates billions)**
- **Social status (leadership positions, respect)**
- **Network effects (business connections, political influence)**
- **Ideological legitimation (religious authority justifies hierarchy)**

The Transformation:

From competing elite (1830-1890):

- **Building alternative state**
- **Threatening existing power**
- **Requiring suppression**

To complementary elite (1896-present):

- **Serving American state interests**
- **Operating within federal system**
- **Contributing to establishment**

The Price:

Surrendered:

- **Revolutionary potential**
- **Alternative governance model**
- **Radical egalitarian economics**
- **Political independence**

The Gain:

Preserved:

- **Institutional survival**
- **Wealth accumulation capacity**
- **Internal authority**
- **Distinct identity**

The Modern Assessment:

Mormons are now establishment—wealthy, powerful, integrated. They began as revolutionary challenge to American elite power. They accommodated to survive. They became what they initially opposed.

This is successful elite integration: Alternative institution transforms into complementary component of existing elite structure, preserving organizational autonomy while serving system interests.

Conclusion: The Accommodation Paradox

The Mormon case illuminates a paradox at the heart of alternative elite formation:

Success requires accommodation → Accommodation requires surrender → Surrender negates alternative

Mormons survived by ceasing to be truly alternative. They preserved organizational form (church hierarchy, tithing, temples) while abandoning revolutionary content (theocracy, polygamy, economic consecration).

They demonstrate that alternative institutions can survive state suppression through strategic surrender—but survival comes at cost of transformation.

This pattern has implications for all contemporary attempts at alternative institution-building:

***Cryptocurrency*: Will survive only by accommodating regulation *Charter cities*: Will gain permission only by accepting host nation sovereignty *Intentional communities*: Persist only when non-threatening to state power *Tech platforms*: Avoid breakup only by cooperating with governments**

The Mormon formula: Surrender what threatens power; preserve what power doesn't care about. This enables organizational survival while limiting revolutionary potential.

Whether this represents success (survival) or failure (cooptation) depends on one's perspective. What's undeniable: The Mormons survived when comparable movements were destroyed, and they remain powerful institution 195 years after founding.

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- **Study of patriarch office and Smith family succession claims. Shows conflicts over hereditary vs. apostolic succession.**

Quinn, D. Michael. "The Mormon Succession Crisis of 1844." *BYU Studies* 16:2 (1976), 187-233.

- **Detailed analysis of succession contest between Rigdon, Young, Strang, Smith family.**

Newell, Linda King, and Valeen Tippetts Avery. *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*. Doubleday, 1984; Second edition University of Illinois Press, 1994.

- **Biography of Joseph Smith's first wife. Shows Emma's resistance to polygamy, support for son's succession claim (RLDS).**

Comparative and Theoretical Works

Abanes, Richard. *One Nation Under Gods: A History of the Mormon Church*. Four Walls Eight Windows, 2002.

- **Critical history emphasizing political ambitions, violence, authoritarianism. Evangelical Christian perspective.**

Givens, Terryl. *The Viper on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

- **Analysis of 19th-century anti-Mormon literature. Shows how Mormons were portrayed as un-American.**

Shipps, Jan. *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*. University of Illinois Press, 1985.

- **Sociological analysis. Argues Mormonism is new religious tradition distinct from Christianity, comparable to Christianity's emergence from Judaism.**

Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Mormonism*. Columbia University Press, 2005.

- **Sociological explanation of Mormon growth using rational choice theory.**

O'Dea, Thomas F. *The Mormons*. University of Chicago Press, 1957.

- **Early sociological study. Classic analysis of Mormon social organization, assimilation tensions.**

State Power and Religious Persecution

Arrington, Leonard J., and Davis Bitton. *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints*. Knopf, 1979; Second edition University of Illinois Press, 1992.

- **Comprehensive history emphasizing persecution narrative. Sympathetic but scholarly.**

Bagley, Will. *Blood of the Prophets*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

- **Argues Mormons were perpetrators not just victims. Challenges persecution narrative.**

Lyman, Edward Leo. *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood*. University of Illinois Press, 1986.

- **Political history of statehood movement. Shows accommodation strategies.**

Alexander, Thomas G. *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930*. University of Illinois Press, 1986; Third edition 2012.

- **Essential for understanding post-Manifesto transformation. Shows continued underground polygamy, political integration.**

Economic and Business Histories

Arrington, Leonard J. *Great Basin Kingdom* (cited above).

- **Essential economic history.**

Embry, Jessie L. *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle*. University of Utah Press, 1987.

- **Oral history project. Shows economic burden of polygamy on families.**

Launius, Roger D., and Linda Thatcher, eds. *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*. University of Illinois Press, 1994.

- **Essays on various dissenting movements including Godbeites, fundamentalists.**

Temple and Ritual Studies

Buerger, David John. *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship*. Signature Books, 1994; Second edition 2002.

- **History of temple endowment ceremony. Documents changes, Masonic influences, penalties.**

Packer, Boyd K. *The Holy Temple*. Bookcraft, 1980.

- **Believing Mormon perspective on temple. Defends secrecy as sacred.**

Geographic and Western History

Stegner, Wallace. *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*. McGraw-Hill, 1964; University of Nebraska Press, 1981.

- **Literary history of Mormon migration. Sympathetic but critical.**

Bagley, Will. *With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849-1852*. University of Oklahoma Press, 2012.

- **Contextualizes Mormon Utah within broader western migration and mining booms.**

Madsen, Brigham D. *The Shoshoni Frontier and the Bear River Massacre*. University of Utah Press, 1985.

- **Study of 1863 massacre of Shoshoni by California Volunteers (with Mormon militia participation). Shows Mormon-indigenous conflicts.**

Comparative Religious Movements

Foster, Lawrence. *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community*. Oxford University Press, 1981; University of Illinois Press, 1984.

- **Comparative study of three 19th-century utopian movements. Shows why Mormons survived when others didn't.**

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*. Harvard University Press, 1972.

- **Sociological analysis of communal movements. Framework for understanding United Order failures.**

Modern Critical Scholarship

Palmer, Grant H. *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*. Signature Books, 2002.

- **Critical examination of Book of Mormon origins, First Vision accounts. Controversial among believers.**

Vogel, Dan. *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*. Signature Books, 2004.

- **Naturalistic biography emphasizing Smith's treasure-seeking background, fabrication of golden plates story.**

Prince, Gregory A., and William Robert Wright. *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*. University of Utah Press, 2005.

- **Biography of mid-20th century church president. Shows corporate modernization, racial policy conflicts.**

Total Sources: 50+ entries covering primary documents, historical studies, sociological analyses, economic histories, legal studies, and comparative frameworks.

This bibliography reflects the interdisciplinary approach required to understand Mormons as case study in alternative elite formation and strategic accommodation. The sources demonstrate how small religious movement transformed from revolutionary challenge to integrated establishment through pragmatic surrender of threatening elements while preserving institutional power.

The Mormon case provides the successful model of accommodation that Nizaris and Jesuits failed to execute—demonstrating that alternative institutions survive by becoming complementary rather than competitive to state power.

End of Study - The Latter-day Saints (1830-1896)

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This case study is part of the collection *Patterns of Power: Systematic Analysis of Elite Control Mechanisms Across Civilizations*